

BOOKS for J. WILKIE.

Pleasures of Retirement,
Preferable to the

Joys of Dissipation;

Exemplified in the

LIFE and ADVENTURES

OF THE

COUNT DE B—.

WRITTEN by HIMSELF.

In LETTERS to a FRIEND.

Now first translated from the Original French,

By a L A D Y.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. WILKIE, in St. Paul's Church-yard.

MDCCLXXIV.

ADVERTISEMENT.

EVERY vice, and every folly, may be so justly claimed by the generosity of mankind, as to render it morally impossible to draw characters which bear not striking resemblances to persons they were never intended for. Constantly, these memoirs will, I am convinced, divers applications, and never dreamt of; and these will be abundantly made by men of little wit and much malice; and others, too despicable to merit praise, and too obscure to excite satire, will, nevertheless, have vanity and weakness sufficient to imagine every author has had them in view. These will untediously rise, and under the specious pretext of public spirit, attack



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verely censured by such criticks, are
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THE

THE
COUNT DE—'s
CONFESSIONS.

WHY would you drag me from my solitude, and trouble my repose? You cannot persuade yourself that I am absolutely determined to live in the country: I have not been in it above one year, and my perseverance astonishes you; What can he do there? you cry: Is it possible, after having been hurried away for such a length of time by the torrent of the world, he can renounce it totally?

Besides, you imagine there are times and moments when I not only regret, but feel, it necessary to me. These sentiments

in you are natural, and by no means surprize me; at your age, formed with every requisite to please, nay, to shine in the world, it would be an ill-natured (as well as a difficult) task, to make it appear odious to you. But for my part, I do (as I certainly ought) esteem it a singular happiness that I was disgusted with the world before I became a burden to, if not the jest of it. I have not yet seen forty, and am thoroughly satiated with those pleasures, the novelty of which renders them, in your opinion, insatiable. I have worn out the world, I have worn out *love* itself. My heart no longer lives to blind, tumultuary passions, consequently I have lost some pleasures; but then I am exempt from the train of ills which fail not to accompany them, in number infinite. This state of tranquillity, or if you will, to accommodate myself to your ideas, this species of insensibility, is ample recompence; and perhaps the only happiness that

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that ought to be within the reach of mortals. Imagine not from this I am deprived of all pleasure. No, I hourly experience one to the full as sensible, much more pure and permanent, than all the rest; the charms of friendship. You ought to know its value, you were made to feel it, because you are worthy to inspire it. I possess the sweetest, the rarest treasure, a faithful friend, who shares my solitude and stands me in the stead of all, in leaving me nothing to regret. You can ill imagine one friend able to recompense the loss of the world; but, spite of all the horrors with which solitude now inspires you, trust me, you will one day regard it as a good inestimable.

I have had your ideas, have been in the same situations, but even then I looked forward to that I am now in, as a reasonable, sensible resource. And to convince you of the truth of what I advance, I have a mind to give you a detail of the remark-

able events and particular circumstances which so early detached me from the world. This recital shall be a faithful confession of the wrong-headedness and errors of my youth; and it may serve you as a lesson against the same mistakes.

It is unnecessary to entertain you with my family, as well known to you as myself, from the nearness of our connexions. Destined by my birth to live in a court, I was bred up like the rest of my rank there; that is to say, very ill. In my infancy I had a preceptor to teach me Latin, &c. who taught me nothing. Some few years after, I was put into the hands of a governor, to instruct me in the manners of a world he was himself totally ignorant of; the care of my education being left entirely to these two useless triflers, only in conformity to the then mode. The same reason, though very different in appearance, early disembarassed me from them both. My preceptor received a box on the

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the ear from one of my mother's women, to whom she owed some secret obligations, the consciousness of which caused her to exclaim loudly against the abbe's insolence; she told him she neither would, or ought to suffer it on any consideration, and that he should be instantly discharged. My governor was very differently treated; he was polite, insinuating, and complaisant; qualifications which soon found their way to the heart of my mother's favourite woman; their amour kept pace with my education; in short, it was begun by his debauching this chamber-maid, and finished by his marrying her. My mother making them a settlement, by which I profited; for I commenced master of my actions at a time of life when a governor is most necessary, if that character was held respectable enough to allow us to hope for a good one. You will soon see by the use I made of my liberty, how well I merited having it to trifle with. I was sent

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to college to finish my education; which, when I was on the point of leaving, a relation of my mother's, who had a kind of authority over me, carried me with him into the country, to the house of a lady who was a particular friend of his; I was well enough received. We naturally love the company of young people, and women, above all, love to meet with opportunities of shewing their wit, sentiment, &c. I gave great attention to all they said, and was not ill prepared to answer their questions. I found they were not displeased with my sprightliness; and diverted themselves greatly at the extravagance of my ideas, which encouraged me to give a loose to them. The day following, many ladies arrived from Paris; some with their lovers, some with their husbands, and some with both the one and the other. The marchioness of Valcourt, tho' not in the bloom of youth, was still extremely amiable; she entered with great spirit

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spirit and humour into the little jests that were levelled at me, and, under pretence of pleasing the lady of the house, who appeared to interest herself about me, the marchioness would have me always with her, and called me her knight errand, a title I was not a little vain of. I always gave her my hand in our walks, and she placed me next her at table. My extraordinary assiduity became the general topic of the company, but I put a much better grace upon all, than they expected from a boy unacquainted with the world; nevertheless, I begun to feel sentiments I dared not declare, and could but imperfectly unravel. I had read some few romances, and believed myself in love; the pleasure, the honour of being distinguished, nay caressed, by an amiable woman, added to the impression which jewels, dress, and perfumes naturally make on the mind of a young man, and, above all, a fine neck, (and madam Valcourt's was divinely beautiful)

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riful) awakened every source of passion in me. In short, all the seducing airs of a woman who has overcome the prejudices of the world, join'd to an ease and elegance rarely, if ever, to be met with in women of an inferior class, plunged me at once into a situation till then unknown to me; and which the marchioness, much better able to define, determined to avail herself of, and undertook the finishing my education, or, in the more polite phrase, to bring me into the world. Her first lecture was upon that *passion* the sex seems formed for, though I have since learned they are capable of every great, generous, and noble action the best of us can boast of. But to return to the marchioness, "Love," says she, "my friend, exists but in the heart, is the sole principle of our pleasures; thence arises all our tender feelings, all our delicacy of sentiments." A style of conversation to me as unintelligible as a thousand others, mingled

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mingled with those metaphysics, which at that time reign'd so much in every thing we said, and so little in every thing we did. The seeming confidence she reposed in me (only to make trial of my discretion) flattered my vanity; a young man is charmed to find himself of consequence in the world; above all, to that part of it he chuses to associate with. In the end she began to sound me on the subject of jealousy, and under colour of forming my ideas, endeavoured to find out what I thought of a man (agreeable enough) who came along with her into the country, and who I afterwards learned was her lover; but I was very far from suspecting it at that time; I imagined him too old, though not above forty, to have any connexion with the marchioness but that of friendship; nevertheless he had one the most intimate. At this time, indeed, she kept him merely from habit, and from taste had destined me his suc-

cessor, or at least his associate. Therefore whenever I asked her the cause of his assuming a sour manner of speaking to her, which I could not forbear remarking, she told me, "that having been an intimate friend of her husband's, that friendship allowed him a right of counselling her with freedom." Satisfied with this frivolous answer, my curiosity went no farther. She frequently reproached me with neglecting my person; would make me sit at her toilet on my return from the chase, and adjust my dress; glossing over this partiality towards me with her friendship for my parents, and her connexion with our family. And far was I from attributing any of these favours to my personal merit. I have often reflected since on the impatience and uneasiness I must have caused her, but she concealed it all. She feared the ridicule an amour so disproportioned *must* draw on her. Besides, she knew her lover was clear-sighted, and
I
however

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however insensible she might feel to the loss of him, judged it prudent to avoid the *eclat* of an open rupture. These reflections rendered the marchioness much more reserved towards me; I perceived it, and threw out many reproaches, more full, I fear, of passion than sentiment: to quiet my apprehensions, she told me, I should see her often at Paris, if I continued to submit the care of my conduct to her, and promised to reward my docility, even beyond my hopes. On our return to Paris I failed not to pay my devoirs to her, and during the two or three first visits, the conversation turned upon things relative to my future conduct and appearance in the world: she assured me I should find *her* my very best friend. One day she bid me come to her the following evening at seven o'clock; I failed not to be punctual, you will readily believe: I found her lolling on a sofa perfuming the whole air, and twenty tapers darting

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their

their resplendent light around ; but what ingrossed my whole attention, was a neck would have beggared all description ; a little part of which was uncovered. She was in a dishabille full of taste ; her attitude disposed to please, and render me less timid. Struck with such variety of delightful objects, it was no wonder, if at my age I experienced sensations too violent to discover, yet difficult to conceal. Unable to utter a single syllable, I stood for some time silent, but not insensible to the ridiculousness of my situation, though I wanted the power to alter it. The marchioness was neither displeased with, or at a loss to find out, the cause of my embarrassment ; she asked if I liked her apartment, &c. “ Like it, madam,” said I, with vivacity, “ I am enchanted.” “ Very well,” says she, “ then we will sup together. Nobody will come to interrupt us ; we may declare our sentiments to each other without restraint.” These words were accompanied

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panied with a look too significant to leave me at a loss for their source and meaning. What followed, you can better imagine than I describe; suffice it to say, that the vivacity youth inspired me with, was better adapted to her taste, than the more refined sentiments of a real and tender passion. Yet was I dupe enough to fear I had offended her; at my time of life it was excusable; but I am sorry to say, that men at all ages are too apt to be duped by women of this cast; whence arises their contempt for the sex in general, which makes them too frequently ungenerous, faithless, and ungratefully cruel to the worthiest part of the human species; consequently they lose the greatest earthly bliss, the union of souls as well as bodies. But to return to my subject, our supper was short, I would not allow the marchioness time to talk to me of sentiment; indeed I believe she had little leisure (perhaps less inclination), to think of it. The next morning one of
her

her servants brought me a most passionate love-letter; her attention surprized me, and my vanity soon persuaded me she had never thought of any man but myself.

I felt myself too much honoured to delay the answering it a single moment, and instantly sat down to write. I believe my letter was a curious one: the marchioness, however, found many charms in it; so easy is it for vanity to blind our judgment; for her's was in general greatly above the common pitch. My thoughts were for some days wholly occupied with my good fortune; the joy, the glory of having an affair with a woman of condition; I imagined all the world perceived it, and read my happiness in my eyes: this idea prevented me talking of it to my friends, but I was very often tempted to do it. A little time after, I found the marchioness did not avow me sufficiently in public, or appear with me often enough at places of amusement; therefore I might, without

without incurring the censure of indiscretion, let my friends into my happiness. In vain did she paint to me the charms of mystery, inspired only by vanity, and a much more brutal passion, which too frequently usurps the name of love, though its greatest opposite. I believed I had done all that was necessary to satisfy the highest degree of delicacy, in satisfying her inclinations and my own. Winter assembling the whole world to Paris, the marchioness, to break through a solitude she saw I could no longer sustain, gave frequent suppers. Among the ladies who came to her house, was one who made me many advances; I answered them with too much vivacity not to awaken the jealousy of the experienced madame Valcourt; she made her complaints to me, which I received ill enough, and told her it was extremely singular, she should think of constraining me so far as not to allow me the liberty of talking to, and amusing myself

myself with her *own friends*. Enraged with jealousy, she no longer kept any measures with the world, but publicly avowed her passion for me; and soon, very soon, afterwards felt its force with a violence she had never before that time shewn me; she was never seen at any public place without me; would sup at no house where I was not asked. So full and glaring a confession was all I wanted; it fed my vanity. In a very little time madame le Rumigny (she it was who made me such advances) seemed piqued; to her honour be it spoken, she was determined to go through with whatever she undertook, right or wrong; amongst women of the world, many things, very different in appearance, produce the same effect, and they are governed to the full as much by vanity as by love. The marchioness shut her door against her rival; their fracas made a great noise. Madame Rumigny wrote a note to desire I would sup
with

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with her; madamede Valcourt had engaged me faithfully to promise I never would go *there*: but not holding my honour engaged in keeping my word with her, I went, and madamede Rumigny, after having been extremely witty upon madame de Valcourt, (at whom every one of the company dealt a blow) pitied me exceedingly, for being so strongly attached to a woman who treated me like a slave; and made me perfectly well acquainted with every adventure, true and false, the world had laid to her charge. The ill we are told of a mistress is by no means so dangerous from the first impression it makes, as from the pretext it furnishes us with in the end, as auxiliaries to disgust, and all the injustice of lovers. Madame de Rumigny, pleased with this first false step, desired I would continue my visits, at the same time assuring me, her only motive for wishing it, was friendship to me. I returned to the marchioness with feelings very different to
my

my former ones; she perceived it, and was not a little alarmed: her fine sentiments touched me no more; wearied and disgusted to the last degree with such an uniformity of pleasures, I went frequently to madame de Rumigny's, who pursued her scheme closely, and soon made me feel for her, all that madame Valcourt had formerly inspired me with, that is to say, desire; but the experience I had already acquired, rendered me a less bashful lover. However, she would not consent to make me happy, until I had offered the poor marchioness a sacrifice at her shrine; nay, insisted upon my offering her up publicly, and in such manner as she should prescribe. "Our quarrel," says she, "has made but too much noise in the world, and I would not have it now ignorant of my revenge." I would fain have remonstrated with her on the absurdity of such a proceeding, and the consequence of it to herself; but she told me, if I hesitated a single moment,

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moment, she would never see me more. This menace soon determined me, I consented to all, I returned the marchioness her letters and her picture, accompanied with a billet, which was, I believe, very impertinent; because it was dictated by her rival: in a word, I quitted madame de Valcourt; could I do worse? I quitted her not, however, without some remorse. In vain do we blindly flatter ourselves we are able to separate honour, honesty, and integrity from our commerce with women. My ideas remained as yet natural and artless; the world had not taught me to perjure myself without suffering the cruellest of all punishments, self-contempt. Madame de Rumigny, from whom I had not my disquiets, used all possible means to calm them: *women have no greater enemies than women*; she no longer suffered me to languish, and would have me attend her the next day to the opera, and sit in one of the most conspicuous boxes: I readily consented;

consented; her triumphs were mine. The marchioness got there before us, adorned with every elegance of dress that could possibly heighten her charms, in order to confute the reports she naturally believed our fracas would occasion; but such a step, on the very day she was forsaken, was an effort which I confess astonished me; not but that I saw, through all this parade, a chagrin beyond her power to conceal; and to make it still more ridiculous, after these heroic appearances, she wrote to me, she followed me, and, in short, acted every extravagance which neglected and enraged love could inspire; and all without success. But madame Rumigny knew too well the consequences of these first and earnest importunities to lose sight of me. I lived some time with her in the same manner I had done with madame de Valcourt; but I became disgusted much sooner. My first and second adventures announced me of a complexion

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plexion not the most constant; the sequel will shew whether they belied me. Madame de Rumigny began to lay very heavy upon my hands when I entered into the musquetairs, which company marched into Flanders, where I made my first campaign. The three last days before my departure I passed with madame de Rumigny in a manner to make her regret me; she exacted many promises from me on the score of writing, but scarcely had I quitted her, when I thought no more of her. After the campaign the regiment returned to Paris, where I passed the winter without even making her one visit. The dissipated life I led with my comrades, appeared to me infinitely preferable to the painful restraint attending our commerce with women of the world. I sought not for those who required my attention, and talked of an attachment *their* heart was as little capable of feeling, as their manners were of inspiring it in others.

others. I followed the example, &c. of the musquetairs of my own age.

On the return of Spring, monsieur de Vandome, to whom my family were particularly attached, made me an offer, I accepted with ardor, to be one of his aid-de-camps, and I went with him into Spain. Occupied wholly by my duty, I attached myself to this prince; that is to say, to the study of my profession, which was the surest (perhaps the only) way of paying court to him; and I had the happiness to find him so well satisfied with my services, as to honour me with his protection; and he very soon obtained a regiment for me, at the head of which I appeared at the battle of Villa Vistra, where monsieur de Vandome gained a complete victory over monsieur de Staremborg.

After this victory, which decided the crown of Spain in favour of Philip the Fifth, my regiment was sent into quarters

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ters at Toledo; leave of absence being difficult to obtain, I remained there to keep the soldiers within bounds, and prevent a thousand disorders likely to arise each moment, in a country where the natives in general had imbibed the strongest and most absurd prejudices against the French. The monks, either from jealousy or ignorance, had persuaded many, above all the women, that the French were heretics. Difference in religion, amongst those who have not studied it, is certainly no reproach to their understanding; nevertheless, I lived almost in absolute solitude. One day as I was returning to my house, through a bye-street, I was accosted by a woman covered with a deep mourning veil; "Signor cavalier," said she, "a lady, who would have some conversation with you, desires you to meet her to-morrow at eleven o'clock in the great church." That I accepted the rendezvous you will readily believe; and that I

spared

spared neither time nor pains the next morning in adorning my person, then fal-
 lied to the place appointed. All the wo-
 men were covered with black veils; but
 one amongst them was distinguishable from
 all the rest by the elegance of her figure
 and the majestic gracefulness of her air: she
 had a woman on each side of her: they
 all three fell on their knees as near as pos-
 sible to me: she was armed with an im-
 mense rosary, and making many devout
 inclinations of the head, when I heard a
 voice say to me, "Be this evening at the
 hour of oraisons upon the borders of the
 Tagus, and follow a woman who will there
 present you with a nosegay. Farewel."
 The harmony of the voice, her manner of
 speaking, as well as what she said, agi-
 tated my whole soul, and carried me to
 the destined place, two hours at least be-
 fore the time appointed; at length (after
 the impatience inseparable from such a
 situation)

situation) I beheld the person who ought to have given me the nosegay; she bid me follow her; I obeyed. Being dark, it was some time before we could meet with a calash; at last we found one, and were scarcely seated in it when she began: "Your youth and your figure, says she, has made the most lively impression on the heart of Donna Antonia, my mistress; love makes her forget the danger of an interview, and feel the most tender passion for you, even in spite of the difference in religion. What consolation for Donna Antonia, if her example and her precepts should bring you back to the bosom of the church. I am her nurse, suffice that, to tell you how much I love her; yet the hopes of your conversion, much more than my tenderness for her, has determined me to serve her on this occasion. You are going where you will in a moment, be able to judge of the charms of my mistress; she is now at my house; render yourself worthy to pos-

self the heart of the most excellent, as
 well as most beautiful, woman in all
 Spain." Spite of the agitation of mind
 the novelty of my situation threw me into,
 I could not help feeling the ridiculousness
 of such a conversation, and was reflecting
 on the difference of manners, when our
 carriage stopped in a little court, where
 we alighted. I followed my guide
 through two or three rooms simply fur-
 nished, and moderately light; whence
 she conducted me to a chamber most mag-
 nificently furnished, and where the splen-
 dour of lights was carried even to flam-
 beaux of vermilion wax; but what amazed
 me infinitely beyond all this, was a lady
 in an alcove reclining upon a cushion of
 the most superb stuff. "Approach, sir,"
 said she. I flew to obey so sweet a com-
 mand; but what could I divine, on be-
 holding all the graces united in one per-
 son, and heightened by every ornament of
 dress. Throwing myself at her feet, "What
 can I do, madam," says I, "to shew my sen-
 sibility

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sibility of this transcendent goodness, this
 honour you do me?" She answered me
 with an infinity of sweetness and fire in her
 eyes, which would inevitably have accom-
 plished my defeat, were it not already con-
 firmed. "Clara, you have doubtless," says
 she, "made known my sentiments in part,
 to spare me the embarrassment of a con-
 fession, the violence of my passion can
 alone excuse: your future conduct, sir,
 towards me must either confirm or destroy
 these sentiments. I love you; but the
 sacrifice I make will render you still more
 dear to me, if I find you worthy of it:
 after such a confession I ought to hide
 nothing from you; you are of a religion
 different from mine, and that is the only
 obstacle to the passion I feel for you. If
 you love me, if the sentiments I imagine
 I read in your eyes be sincere, you must
 first prove it by embracing the catholic
 faith." I would fain have seized one of
 her hands and kissed it, to avoid a con-

feſſion of faith which to me appeared ſo ill-timed; but ſcarcely had I touched her when ſhe cried out, “Bring me this moment ſome holy-water, my dear Clara.” And ſhe really fetched her a holy water-pot, in which ſhe dipped a towel, and waſhed the hand I had touched with ſuch vehemence, I could not forbear ſmiling; but unwilling to ſhock her prejudices, I took that opportunity to tell her, *ſhe* was my religion, and that love might perhaps make me a more zealous Catholic than I had hitherto been. “How eaſily does the voice of him we love perſuade,” ſays ſhe, “it triumphs over all our reſolutions; my arguments have little convinced you, yours have abſolutely perſuaded me. I apparently love you much more than you love me, and this is an advantage that I preſerve over you.” I kiſſed her hand a thouſand times, and ſhe no longer had recourſe to holy water. I intreated her to tell me to whom I had

the honour and happiness of talking, "You will one day know," says she: "seek not to penetrate into a mystery, where the discovery will profit you nothing: merit, by love unlimited, the happiness I am preparing for you."

The faithful Clara then served us up a light repast, and I became each moment more and more enchanted with the innumerable graces I discovered in this divine Spaniard; every thing in her breathing delight, and promising the happiness I a few minutes after obtained; a happiness beyond my utmost hopes, or any idea I could form of pleasure. "You will not love me long," says the sweet Antonia, "the conquest has cost you too little: you are ignorant of the many severe combats I have sustained. I have loved you ever since the first day of your arrival: as you marched over the Grande-Place at the head of your regiment, I viewed you from a grated window; Oh heavens! what have

I not done, what means left untried, to banish from my *too* tender, too sensible heart, the impression one sight of that dear image made on it; though I flew from you, but ill in appearance; for I always met you." We passed the night, and all the following day, amidst those pleasures and tender inquietudes with which passion inspires lovers, and encourages them to believe such happiness can know no alloy. Within a moment of our parting, Antonia raised up the cushion on which she had been seated, and drew from under it a gold sword, richly ornamented with brilliants of immense value, and forced me to accept of it. Politeness obliged me to take it; for you cannot offer a higher affront to a Spaniard, than to refuse his presents. I received it then with every mark of respect and gratitude; kissing a thousand, thousand times the beautiful, bounteous hand that bestowed it on me, and went alone into the calash,

calash, which carried me to the place where I the day before met the Duenna. No sooner was I awake the next morning, than I received a letter from Antonia, brought me by a Moor: it was both passionate and tender. She begged I would take an airing on horseback over the Grand-Place: "I shall see you," added she, "without being seen; and be spiteful enough to enjoy the perplexity you shall be in, at not being able to find me out. Clara will tell you to-morrow, in the Great Church, when, where, and how we may meet again."

I executed the orders given me, and after gazing (to no manner of purpose) on all the galleries round the place, returned to my house, wholly occupied with my adventure. I met Clara at church the next morning, who said to me, (all the time pretending to pray to God most devoutly) "Mount your horse in the dusk of the evening, and go, without any attendants,

tendants, to the wall that is behind the convent of St. Francis, where the Moor you saw yesterday will meet you, riding on a mule; and you will have nothing to do but to follow him." I was punctual to the appointment, and met the Moor, who all along observed the most profound silence: at length we arrived at the back-entrance of a castle, which appeared to me considerable, where I alighted. The Moor took my horse, and made a sign to me to go up a pair of winding stairs; on the top of which I found Clara waiting. "Come," says she, "thou most happy of mankind;" and conducted me by a dark lanthorn into a closet, from whence I went into a most superb apartment, where the divine Antonia impatiently expected me. "You," says she, "even triumph over my fears; I taste the pleasure of possessing you in my own house, spite of all the perils and risks I run in the attempt. I hope the happiness I have

in

in seeing you here will meet with no interruption ; but in case of accidents you may retire ; the Moor holds your horse at the bottom of the stairs." I employed every term, pathetic and tender, to convince her of my gratitude and love. And we were in the midst of those transports of soul which love alone can inspire, and which are far above the force of words to express, when we heard a most violent noise in the chamber preceding that we were in. "Fly," cried the charming Antonia in a rage ; "I am betrayed, I shall perish ; but I will not complain, if I dare believe you in safety." The door instantly flew open, and I beheld a man enter, transported with madness and fury, followed by two armed valets ; he held a sword in one hand, and a poignard in the other ; and rushed with such violence upon the sweet Antonia, that I could no longer forbear dealing him two such blows as laid him at my feet. I had pocket-

pistols, with which I soon dropped the wretch, who dared to attempt to wound Antonia, though held in reverence by the reptiles that accompanied him. She took me by the arm, and said, in a faint and dying voice, "What have you done, seigneur! you^e have killed my husband." The two valets, busy in succouring their master, allowed me time to escape their fury. Carrying my dear Antonia in my arms, I gained the closet door, and went directly down the back-stairs, without meeting with one obstacle: I mounted my horse, and, by the assistance of my trusty Moor, got Antonia up before me; leaving, with all possible speed, this melancholy mansion, this scene of horror, without so much as knowing whither I was going; abandoning myself entirely to the swiftness and will of my horse.

My poor Antonia shewed no signs of life; yet I stopped to try, by every means within my power, to restore that life, the
only

only solace of my own; and happily found my tender and earnest endeavours prove effectual. "Is it possible! is it you?" cried she, on opening her beauteous eyes: "you live! my misfortunes no longer touch me; but of this be assured, mercy is a thing that neither you nor I must dare to hope for; the rank, the dignity of my husband will draw on you enemies innumerable: you have killed the marquis of Palamos. My only resource is in my brother; he has a castle not far from this place, let us go to it; he will not refuse me an asylum. I mounted my horse, and carrying her in my arms, we arrived by break of day at the castle. We had the count, her brother, waked, and were conducted to his chamber, unseen of any, but one of his domestics.

A recital of the cruel adventures which had befallen a sister he most tenderly loved, filled his humane and benevolent heart

with those horrors, those painful sensations, a less susceptible mind can form no idea of; he pitied, he bemoaned her, he gave her all possible succours, both for her mind and body. Upon dressing her wounds, they were found not to be mortal. He then advised me to keep myself concealed the remainder of the day. On the first appearance of night, he came and addressed me in the terms following: "The services, Sir, that you have rendered my sister, make me forget the vengeance due from me to the murderer of my brother-in law. My sister," added he, "has confessed to me, she would that I should save your life; that you are most dear to her: therefore, the friendship I bear her, and the confidence you have reposed in me, by chusing my house for an asylum, engages me to favour your escape. I shall give immediate orders for a person to be ready, who will conduct you safe to

to Madrid, through bye-roads." I earnestly conjured him to allow me one sight of the marchioness; but, alas! all my prayers, tears, and entreaties were of little avail. "She has," added he, "made me promise to deliver this packet into your own hands; I keep my word, but more than this I cannot do." No sooner had he spoke these words, than he shewed me into a court, where the man who was to serve as my guide waited with my horse, and we went away that instant. With an heart broken (nay, torn into a thousand pieces) was I driven away from the most charming of her sex, in whom alone I lived, and for whom alone I submitted to endure a life of torture: I left her without one single hope of ever seeing her more: and what a cruel situation did I leave her in! dying and lost to the world for ever, ruined on my account. We travelled all night, and on the approach of day, took some little repose, in a village quite

quite out of the common road. The first thing I did, was to open the packet sent me by the divine marchioness, where I found her picture, and a letter as full of tenderness and regret as I ought to have written to her : she intreated I would keep that picture as long as I lived, which she, in our happiest moments the day before, intended giving me ; it was in a box richly ornamented with diamonds. But that which appeared most singular to me (tho' I had before observed it was the charm or spell throughout Spain) was a relique of St. Antony of Padua, which she had parted between us : " Because," says she in her letter, " it is to him I attribute our safety in this last cruel adventure. Let me conjure you never to part with it a single moment ; reflect on the dangerous situations to which my husband's family exposes you." She then finished, by assuring me of eternal love.

I arrived

I arrived at Madrid without any sort of accident, and sent back my guide with a letter for the marchioness, and one for her brother; then went directly to pay my duty to monsieur de Vandome, who received me with that goodness and politeness which attaches the hearts of the whole army to him. I related to him my unhappy adventure; he advised me not to think of remaining at Madrid, for fear of the assassins, and the consequence such an affair might produce between the two kingdoms; and assured me, at the same time, he would go and have the quarters of my regiment immediately changed. I found little pain in keeping myself concealed; the wretched state of my mind rendered all company insupportable to me. Absolutely ignorant of the place of my retreat, my regiment was relieved; and the campaign approaching, I was soon in a condition to join it. Our operations proved successful. I was sent into summer

mer quarters to a large village, near which was an abbey of nuns. Following the orders we received, of protecting the convents, I had established a guard there, and frequently walked under the wall of a garden belonging to this abbey; solitude best suiting the situation of my heart. As I was one day passing under the windows of one side of this great house, I heard a lattice open, and saw a letter fall at my feet; I picked it up, and instantly cast my eyes towards the gallery, already shut, and left me nothing to see. I was astonished to find the letter addressed to me, but more so on reading the contents of it: it said much in praise of that melancholy which seemed to overwhelm me. The hand-writing was utterly unknown to me: I could not, dared not, flatter myself it came from the marchioness, who, they had assured me, died of her wounds. It was, however, certain, the letter must have been written by some person who

had

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had learned the whole of our wretched story from herself. Perplexed with doubts innumerable, I returned to my house, and wrote such a letter as I hoped would infallibly draw on an eclaircissement; and the next day, at the same hour, I posted myself under the same window; the lattice was instantly drawn up, and down came a little basket tied to a riband: I opened it, and finding it empty, put my own letter into it, and it flew up like lightning. I waited some time, and received no signal; but the day following another letter fell at my feet, informing me that the writer of it wished to hold some conversation with me, relative to my misfortunes, and desired I would meet them at midnight along the side of the garden-wall, and pointed out a pavilion, near which I should find a ladder of ropes. No longer doubting the letters came from Clara, I went to the place appointed, and found the ladder, by the help of which I

scaled

scaled the wall, and was instantly in the garden. Perceiving a woman covered with a veil retire into a covered alley, which leads towards a grove, I followed her, and found her sitting on a turfed seat. "My dear Clara," says I, "(for you can be no other) is it true that the marchioness is no more? nothing but to talk of her, to weep for her, to indulge the miserable melancholy of this wretched heart, could have enabled me to prevail upon myself to come here." "No," replied the woman veiled, "she is not dead; your dear Antonia lives." The voice, the expression, &c. could not fail discovering to me it was the marchioness herself. I fell at her feet; supported by me, she remained for some time speechless, tried by the same affliction; but as soon as this tender scene was over, we asked each other ten thousand thousand questions. I reproached her for leaving me so long ignorant of the place of her abode, languish-

ing under the most dismal apprehensions for her life; sensible, as *she* must be, that my own life (nay, infinitely more, my every moment's ease) depended upon her welfare. She told me her brother had intercepted my letters, and made her believe me unfaithful. "The heart-felt sorrow this caused me, and the noise my unfortunate adventure had made in the world," added she, determined me to intreat my brother would allow me the means of living and dying unknown: he readily consented, spread the report of my death, and conducted me himself to this abbey, where no mortal knows me. I shall die contented, since you are faithful to me; this was all I could hope for in the present situation to which love had reduced me. I confess I was unable to resist the pleasure of conversing with you once more: the manner and the place are suspicious; but my intentions are pure; seek not to see me any more; I go to endeavour to forget

get you, and complete the sacrifice I am about to make of you to him who gave me being. Adieu, I will no longer be held by the world." In saying this, she disengaged herself from me, and took flight into the windings of the grove, leaving no possibility of my meeting her again. During my fruitless researches, day-light appeared, and obliged me to retire. On my return home, I found a box of diamonds of immense value; which she had the address to put into my pocket, unperceived by me. I walked a thousand times under the same window, in hopes to give or receive a letter, and return the box; but all my efforts, alas! were vain. I could see nothing, I could hear nothing, and determined at length to go up to the gates and desire to speak to the abbess, who received me with great politeness. I told her I had business of the last importance to impart to a lady who was in her house, and shewed her my Antonia's picture,

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picture, which she feigned not to know. In short, I judged from all her answers, it were absurd to insist any more on what she came determined not to grant; and I went away in absolute despair. A few days after, I received orders to assemble my regiment, and join the army. I made them file off just before the abbey; flattering myself that my departure would at least incline her to afford me a last consolation; but I deceived myself, not a shadow of hope remained, and I was obliged to leave her with an heart penetrated with sorrow and despair. The operations of the campaign only were capable of diverting me a single moment from the chagrine which devoured me. We besieged Gironne and took it; the rest of the campaign was passed between monsieur de Vandome and monsieur de Staremberg in observations, which fatigued them mutually. They sent fresh troops from France to relieve those which had

suffered

suffered most, and my regiment was in that number; and on its arrival in France, was sent into country quarters to * * *.

The conference which was then begun at Utrecht, gave the first hopes of a peace.

Thus circumstanced, I might have asked leave to return to Paris; but I was ever of opinion we ought seldom, if at all, to use this privilege, unless business made it indispensably necessary: I had none, therefore remained with my regiment. The

life we lead in country quarters is agreeable only to those subalterns who have known no other; and exceedingly tiresome to men of the world. The turn of

conversation is a mixture of provincial insipidity, and the licentious jokes of the military; these two things, so void of charms in themselves, could not both together produce much amusement. Hap-

pily my maxim had ever been to make a virtue of necessity, to repine at nothing, and always to prefer the present company;

in

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in a word, I gave myself up intirely to a garrison life. We were presented in a body by a brother soldier, who had been the day before in every house in the place, that received officers; and we learned in one moment which of the ladies the regiment we replaced had left unoccupied. They took great pains to point out to me those who were devoted to the general officers; as it is customary on these occasions to consider the rank of the person you attach yourself to. And sure nothing on earth can be more ridiculously droll, than their manner of examining, for the first four and twenty hours, in order to fix, as they call it, their hearts, which nevertheless turn about to every point of the compass, and are ever ready for the first new comer, who to them is as welcome as the last. They immediately began talking of the regiment we came to replace: the women poured forth their praise most lavishly: the officers were polite, amiable, &c. &c.

and made it their study to find out amusements for them; gave them the most agreeable balls, and other entertainments, that could be imagined; such suppers, such music. In short, I soon found the surest way of gaining these new Venus's, was to tread in the steps of our predecessors. Recitals of the past is one of those arts to which women of all nations most voluntarily have recourse. The ladies of the garrison, who had preserved the pictures of their lovers, did not carry them about in bracelets, but had them in large portraits, which ornamented their assembly-rooms. I attached myself to a madame de Grandcour, who was tolerably pretty, and the very next day I gave her a ball. This was a declaration allowed, the eclat of which was absolutely necessary before she could receive me, and I was very soon after put into commission. I always made *madame* parties, and was admitted to a tête a tête after supper, or sometimes

sometimes before the hour of assembly, which they held alternately at each other's houses. What the field officers and the captains did in their society, was closely followed by the subalterns; and a regiment is perhaps better established in three days (at least more comfortably) than at the end of the year; since in the beginning there can be no chimerical reproaches on the one side, or infidelity on the other. I lived in a settled commerce with madame de Grandcour, when from a caprice, the motive of which I could never thoroughly fathom, she told me one evening, in the midst of a very crowded assembly, she whispered to me, that I must not think of staying after the rest of the company; that she had reasons infinite to beg I would not attempt it; but when midnight approached, I had no more to do but to come to the balcony of her window, where I should meet with a ladder of ropes, by aid of which I might pass unobserved to

D

her

her apartment. On the easy terms we lived together, all this precaution appeared to me superfluous enough ; nevertheless I raised no difficulties, but went away with the rest of the company, and marched to my post at the appointed hour : finding the mysterious ladder, I instantly mounted, and had very near passed underneath the balcony leading to her apartment when the patrol came by ; the officer who commanded it perceiving me, ordered me to descend directly, in order to put me under arrest : I went down in a most violent rage, but scarcely had the officer (who was of my regiment) found who it was, when he burst into a loud fit of laughter, crying out, “ And is it you, colonel, what the devil are you going to do at the balcony ? I thought your affair farther advanced than that.” “ I thought so too,” replied I, “ but silly complaisance for a fool.” “ Go, go,” says he, “ you are not formed to need to have recourse to these

these ways; they should now a-days make no one come in at a window, that they would not gladly throw out of it: knock at the door, and make them open it to you." He was ready to execute what he advised, had I not prevented him, by returning to my house full of vexation. Such an adventure befalling a colonel in a garrison, cannot long remain a secret; mine was published the very next day. I had, however, time to recover myself a little, and received all their raillery with a good grace: the most severe I had to encounter was that of the intendante; "Sure," says she, "I have all possible cause of complaint, monsieur le count, to pass unnoticed by *you*, who can stoop so low as a Bourgoise: that taste is arbitrary, I will allow, but it must be highly vitiated to feed on vermin." That I seldom went to her house was most true; the insipidity and impertinence that ever reigned there, kept me away. Monsieur the inten-

dant was a little insignificant figure, full of pretensions; a low, vulgar appearance, with the air of a coxcomb; an incessant talker, tiring you to death with his false humour and frippery witticisms, all which he displayed in a manner as glaringly silly as was his countenance. I had remarked at our first interview (through all that excessive politeness he believed he shewed me) a self-sufficiency, carried, as I should have imagined, to the very highest pitch, had I not seen madame, his lady. In short, this extraordinary pair pushed the haughty and the vain to the last degree of folly, far beyond the reach of rational ideas to form a conception of. The advances my adventure drew on me from madame, produced a total change in my conduct; and boldly resolving to attach myself to her, I was determined to amuse myself one way or other; and to bring it about, I had mischief enough to cherish and keep up both their madness;
(unhappily

(unhappily the troops have sometimes occasion for these sort of people) I flattered their pride, I applauded all their ridiculous absurdities, and in speaking to them I always said "people of your rank," &c. I maintained that appearance and dignity was absolutely necessary in the high post of honour they occupied, and made no small part of their service to the king. This conduct of mine proved very useful to my regiment, which was in the town by detachments only, the main body being cantoned in country villages near it.

The soldiers committed many disorders, but all the complaints of the country against them were only heard, and their quarters rendered better.

The good graces of madame l'intendant, which I began to obtain, still increased the partiality already shewn them. I was the most considerable person then at * * *; therefore she listened to me from vanity, and I took her because I had

nothing better to do; she could hardly be called pretty, but necessity and youth rendered me little nice, or difficult.

My predecessor was a young officer of the infantry, perfectly beautiful and accomplished. The honour of madame the intendant's notice flattered him; and by an implicit obedience, and blind submission to her will, he seduced her pride. But he was sacrificed to me, and most dearly did I pay for it; exposed to endure her tiresome conversation, upon the prerogative of her place, day after day. The *hauteur* with which she treated every one in my presence, is beyond all power of conception. In short, she forgot nothing, and outre'd every thing, to persuade me of the dignity and eminence of the intendant; and to make me forget, although a sovereign in a province, she was but a Bourgeoise at Paris. Notwithstanding that every thing announced the peace, which was soon after concluded, I wished to in-
dulse

dulge an inclination I had always had for travelling, above all, to see Italy; and finding it convenient enough to go from the place where I then was, I wrote for leave, and obtained it. The charms of madame l'intendante were incapable of holding me; my attachment to her being apparently fixed to the town where I found her; for meeting her the following year at Paris, not a single syllable was ever mentioned of our *quondam* amour. But I could not help remarking how much the vanity of an intendant has frequently to suffer in a town which serves so perfectly to correct the insolent impertinence of inferior officers. After having quitted * * *, I travelled all through Italy, not forgetting any one circumstance which could interest my curiosity, or reward my labour: I was particularly attentive to avoid all those things which too frequently disgrace the young men of France; and, above all, upon my guard against the danger of the

courtezans; and I verily believe I should have returned home without knowing one Italian lady, if an adventure I met with at Venice had not helped me to an occasion: a young and beautiful woman, with a most graceful and elegant person, named signora Marcella, held me there three months in the most constant course of lively, uninterrupted pleasure. There is no country where gallantry reigns more than it does in France; but the tender, the delicate passion, the lively transports of love, we meet with in the Italians only.

Love, which makes the amusement of the French, is the most important business, nay, the only occupation of an Italian. Instead of reciting this adventure myself, I will insert a letter written some few days after my departure from Venice, by Marcella, to one of her friends, who inclosed it to me, to shew me, that a circumstance which appeared to me trifling, was of too much importance for an Italian to forget.

“ To

“ To *signora* Maria, from *signora* Marcella.

“ What, my dear friend, can alleviate my heart's sufferings? who raze from my mind the memory of past pleasures? How happy are you with your lover; together in the country, without any one obstacle to your passion. The beauties of the place might add to the delights of love, did love need any aids. Paris is, alas! now become the sole object of my views; that *town* so pleasing to the women, its inhabitants, and so fatal to me, boasts the birth of signor Carlo *, and is at this instant blessed with his presence: Why cannot I be *there*? not left a miserable, melancholy wretch, weary of my existence, which is marked but by my sufferings. Allow me, my estimable friend, (it will a little soften my pains) to retrace

* The Italians accustom themselves to give this name to their lovers more frequently than that of his family.

to you the indelible impressions love has imprinted on my fond, though foolish, heart; whence you may judge, if ever any one more sorely or sharply has felt his fury. You are not now to learn I lived for five years with my husband, in the most undisturbed union, mistaking a languishing insensibility for love. For signor Carlo alone was it reserved to draw me out of this error.

“ It is some months since I first saw him at the ridotto; that one sight of him gave me a new heart, a new soul, and I was carried away by an invincible impulse, which deprived me of the powers of reflection. Determined to profit of the happy liberty of the masquerade, I began a conversation with him: his wit charmed me infinitely more than his person had done; and the desire I felt to please him, gave me courage to make some advances, which I feared, after I had left him, might make him confound me with the
coquettes

coquettes and courtezans. These and a thousand such idle conjectures, busied and perplexed my mind the whole night. Love, which gives and destroys the ideas in one and the self-same instant, made me both doubt his sensibility and flatter my hopes. I charged my gondoliers to inform themselves, with the utmost exactness, of every thing relative to him, who, I already found, was my heart's idol; and learned the next day his name, his place of abode, and that he had been a month at Venice. In our conversation at the masque I found, to my sorrow, he was a Frenchman; vanity, however, rendered me ten thousand times more solicitous to fix him: with transport I learned he was totally free from all engagements, and had no sort of commerce with those unhappy wretches our town swarms with. Bent on my conquest, I went the next day to the ridotto, where I met him. I had observed the day before that he left me

for a moment to enquire my name, and I remarked it with pleasure. My confusion, on seeing him again, was extreme; he was unmasked, and I could easily read in his countenance the impression I had made on him. My eyes seized with vivacity every motion, every glance of his: our conversation was animated by that curiosity which awakens all the senses, which gives, and which makes, each instant new discoveries. I found him well instructed in every thing that could possibly regard me; and judged by myself, that this sort of curiosity is never the consequence of indifference. Impatient to know the power my face would have on him, I made him a sign to follow me, which he readily obeyed; and we went from the ridotto to one of those coffee-rooms that surround it. I made them open a private chamber, and the moment we were left alone, he entreated I would pull off my masque, and I yielded to his

impor-

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importunities. Oh! how subdued was pride at this instant; how conquered by love! I waited for my sentence, which a glance of the eye soon came to pronounce. My whole existence seemed suspended, till I observed in the eyes of my lover a joy, a delight, which penetrated my very soul, the eagerness, the vivacity of his caresses, made me fear he would even surpass me in love, and filled up the measure of my passion. I cannot now express how love inspired us both in one instant; we could not remain much longer in this place; the time would only serve us to concert measures capable of insuring our happiness in future: I insisted on his returning to the ridotto, and I went to my own house, wholly occupied with my passion. My husband, my house, my people, in short every thing round me, wore a new aspect, and a *most* disagreeable one, in my eyes. I had a new kind of life to arrange. I wished to be acquainted with

with all the false steps of my lover. What strange ideas! What a variety of projects busied my mind! but I have since amply experienced that love knows how to smooth over all difficulties. I sent my gondolier once more to reconnoitre the house of my lover, with a strict charge to look, observe, and examine narrowly into every the most minute circumstance. I should have bestowed infinitely more pains to gratify my curiosity, or rather my heart, which was but ill at ease, had not Carlo known my gondolier, and given him a *billetdoux* for me; it was written with spirit and sensibility. In short, love dictated, and love read it. I questioned my miserable messenger most unmercifully; my impatience rendered me uncommonly precipitate, and made each new question appear of infinitely more importance to me than the last, though made without order or coherence enough to render them intelligible.

I learned,

“ I learned, however, that his house was situated on the side of a small canal, not far from my palace, in a place very little frequented ; therefore I might, by the help of a masque, easily go there. This indecorum would need an apology, was I writing to any other than an Italian. I was to meet him that evening at the ridotto, where I settled my plan, and Carlo was to attend my coming at three o’clock the next day. Animated as I was by love, when the hour of my departure arrived, I felt a pain till then unknown to me ; my wretched heart fluttered, my spirits sunk ; every dreadful, perhaps fatal, consequence of the dangerous and imprudent step I was about to take, stared me full in the face ; and my whole soul was agitated with that sort of irresolution which arises more from the doubts of love than the combats of virtue. I experienced amply those tender emotions an approach of pleasure gives. My lover, who waited
with

with no little impatience, ran to meet me, seized my hand, to conduct me to his apartment, but not without stopping every second step to load me with careffes. My soul, no longer its own, soon became too highly enchanted to refuse me to love, and too passionate to feel remorse while swimming down the tide of pleasure, and some *hours* appeared but as one single moment to me: all was new, and this novelty, my dear Maria, is the very life, the soul of love. Never did a more lovely confusion invade my ideas; fearful even in my wishes, embarrassed in my expressions, seduced by pleasure, animated by that of my lover, I was but too docile and submissive: with regret we perceived the night draw on, which must separate us, or rather tear us from the arms of love: signor Carlo conducted me to the first gondola. How passionately fond was I of my lover! I reproached myself with the faint testimony I had given him of my affection;

affection; wished to see him again, to prove it more fully, and worthy the sentiments my heart overflowed with each instant. I went to signora Baldi's, willing to make a visit I dared avow to my husband; I found her amidst a circle of the beau monde, who appeared to be dazzled with my beauty; the felicity of love had diffused a vivacity and serenity over my whole countenance and figure. My lover became each day more dear to me, nay, dearer than life. Passion prompted us to seek new rendezvous; we readily found them; occasions presenting themselves by thousands, which we failed not to improve. In short, all with which love inspires his votaries, all that pleasure can procure, with singular success, we put in practice, ever finding something new. But what remains for me now, my dear friend! bitter reflection only: alas, he is gone, my dear Carlo is gone! How can I sustain the thought of seeing him no more!

more! It is true, I hear from him, but the feeble pleasures letters bring, serve only to make me more sensibly regret happier days. The multitude of admirers which now beset me, only irritate my pain; unable to efface the dear image of Carlo from my soul. Adieu, my much loved friend; pity, and continue to love me."

I was in all the variety of my intrigue with the signora Marcella, when the news of the king's death arrived at Venice, and I received orders at the same time to return to France. Less attached to Venice by my amour, than by the general round of amusements I entered into, it cost me little pain to quit it. I endeavoured, but in vain, to console the poor Marcella; I promised to return to her; and, after all the protestations which lovers make on such occasions, and sometimes with the greatest sincerity in the world, though they never keep them, I left her. Scarcely
had:

had I reached Paris when I received from signora Maria the letter I have given you: I got many likewise from the poor Marcella, full of tenderness and transport; I writ to her several times, but absence very soon obliterated from my mind all remembrance of her; and undoubtedly the perseverance of some other lover gained him that place I held in her heart; she ceased writing to me, and I heard no more of her. On my arrival at court, I found every thing wore a different aspect; the late king, who had in his youth been extremely gallant, always kept up a becoming dignity and decorum in his pleasures; the superb entertainments he gave, rendered his court the most brilliant of any in Europe; and was, above all other things, most favourable to the progress of arts and sciences, which took such long strides in his time as few could reach, no kingdom outdo. To acquire a fine, just, and elegant taste, it was only necessary

necessary for the courtiers to imitate the king, and the having it was the only recommendation to his favour: but as he advanced in years, they were obliged sometimes to have recourse to flattery, to preserve that favour. The king, in his old age, took a turn to devotion, and in an instant the whole court became devout, or appeared to be so. After his death the scene totally changed, and under the regency this hypocrisy was dispensed with. The small number of the really virtuous remained as they were, and they who had played with it, became abundantly honest men by learning to be hypocrites; many too there were as false in their libertinism as they had been in their devotion, and believed they were making their court by abandoning themselves to pleasures, to which it is certain they were perfectly indifferent, if not averse. For my part, I had no pretensions, and was not of an age to be ambitious; therefore I followed my
natural

natural bent. My heart could not rest idle; and my first business was to seek out a fair to whom I might attach myself. Madame de Seranne, young, handsome, well made, and newly married, appeared to me most worthy my homage: I immediately attached myself to *her*, and was indefatigable in my assiduity. Happily she had no engagement (for I never esteemed a husband any thing). Madame de Seranne was naturally frank, open, and sincere; she received my addresses, and so soon as she had conceived a liking to me, she followed it, and very soon after gave me proofs of it. We lived for about two months in the most perfect union, when she became insensibly a coquette; it was then, at least, I began to perceive it: when I reproached her with it, she seemed astonished, and told me she had nothing, she believed, to reproach herself with on that head; because she loved me, and me only. I yielded to her
 decla-

declarations and promises, but this calm
 lasted not long, madame de Seranne took
 little trouble to undeceive me, or precau-
 tion to deceive me. Her beauty began
 to make an *eclat* in the world, and draw
 a thousand admirers after her; and though
 I could not perceive she preferred any one
 of them to me, I saw she listened to
 them all, with too much facility, and to
 all the advances they made her. I re-
 newed my complaint: madame de Seranne,
 who had before with great goodness re-
 moved my fears, now told me my idle re-
 proaches wearied her. Not looking on
 her rage as a proof of her innocence, I
 flew out of the house, and was two whole
 days without seeing her; but love brought
 me back again, when I both begged her
 pardon, and loaded her with fresh re-
 proaches, at one and the self-same time.
 However, our quarrels seemed made up,
 and we continued together some time;
 but most part of it was passed in quarrels
 and

and reconciliations. At length, harassed as much by my complaints as I was by her coquetry, she declared to me she could no longer support my ill-humour, that she had settled her plan, and gave me my congé. I accepted of it, but the rage and vexation I then felt, made me exclaim loudly against her and the whole sex. I charged them with infidelity, levity, &c. &c. What was extremely singular, she never took another lover, and the public had always regarded her as a character diametrically opposite to that of a coquette; and indeed I have myself, since that time, deemed her worthy their opinion. If I judged differently of her when we lived together, it was perhaps because my temper, if not my judgment, had been marred by the two adventures which befel me in Spain and Italy. I made some very serious reflections upon the women, and upon myself; and I found I ought not at *Paris* to look for the passion of an *Italian*,

or

or the constancy of a *Spaniard*, but that I must again resume the manners of my country, and bring my expectations within the bounds of French gallantry. In short, I determined in future to act upon this principle; never to attach myself; to pursue pleasure, yet preserve my heart free and unhurt, and to run on with the current of society. I will not tire you with a circumstantial detail of the numberless intrigues I instantly found myself engaged in; suffice it to say, the greatest part of them began and ended in the same manner. Mere accident forms these engagements, a lover enters into them because it either amuses, or is convenient to him, and quits them because they cease to be so, and because all things must have an end. I applied myself simply to distinguish the different characters of the women with whom I had held some commerce. I had no sooner broke with madame de Seranne, than I met in madame Porfigny all that was necessary to confirm

confirm me in the sentiments I had newly adopted, as well as in the resolution I was about to take, never to have a serious attachment of the heart. The women in Paris, are in general less communicative among each other than the men; they are divided into different classes, which have little, if any, commerce with one another. Each of these classes have their particular stile of gallantry fixed and determined, their choice, society, and their customs, peculiar to themselves; but all had pleasure for their object: and this is the charm of living at Paris. I had both leisure and opportunity to remark all these differences. Madame de Persigny, was what we call, in the gardens of Paris, a petite maitress, she was born decisive, and peremptory; the circle of her wit but narrow, and contracted; she was lively, and for ever talking; and her repartees, more happy than just, were often even too brilliant: bred up a spoiled child,

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because she was then pretty, the lover finished what the parents had begun. She believed her presence necessary every where, and to every body's happiness; consequently there was nothing to be *seen*, nor any one place could go to, where madame Persigny did not appear. One of her warmest wishes was, to possess the privilege that young men have, of exhibiting themselves at so many different places in an evening; and to indemnify herself for such a partial, and barbarous restraint, she flew about in a calash finished in the highest taste, with a most brilliant set of horses, through all the public drives in the environs of Paris. She often carried her company to sup at the country houses of her acquaintance in their absence; the accommodation, however homely, never displeased her; preferring every thing to her own house without company, and going to bed. Too lively to subject herself to a party at play,

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she frequently began, and left them in the middle of a game; but the *table* she *did* love, and there indeed she was charming: it was at a supper I first became acquainted with her, and our intimacy was carried pretty far that night. Born a coquette, she soon perceived the impression she had made on me, and redoubled her coquetry; at rising she proposed a party to Neuilly (that folly was then in its novelty); I readily agreed to it, and followed with one of her friends: I had the honour likewise of attending her home, and of leaving her with an ample provision of meditated parties, and projects innumerable, to every one of which she engaged me: she could propose nothing I did not with pleasure consent to. In short, I had an inclination to please *her*, or, more properly speaking, to have her; consequently suffered myself to be hurried away into a life of turbulence; my darling impelled me to see every thing, and my natural facility made me adapt myself to every

one's taste. If one of these parties unfortunately failed, another must absolutely be substituted in its room. It was then madame de Persigny's imagination fell to work, and that messages flew about like lightning; for it was indispensibly necessary to find out something to fill up every interval she found vacant: the bare apprehension of dulness was to her the worst of evils: when a party was to be replaced, she became wonderfully kind; she had an insinuating turn, and with this alone, women the most extravagantly absurd, often make men not only approve of, but bear a part in every folly that passes through their idle brain. In these, and some such similar circumstances, I obtained all I wished; but had the mortification to find that madame de Persigny's favours were by no means marks of her attachment to me. The meetings she gave me were almost always in the air, fluttering, unsubstantial: a supper *tête à tête* at a country house appeared to

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her too long, though she was, nevertheless, content to spend some moments *there*; and she was graciously pleased to reward my passion, or rather knight-errantry, in the moments I least expected it. After this manner I was accustomed, for the most part, to be entertained at her toilet; because she observed it took up less of her time, than giving me a formal rendezvous. It is certain she had not even the appearance of temperament, and that complaisance, hear-say alone determined her. She took a lover as she would a piece of furniture, because it was the custom; that is to say, the mode. She dismissed him as absolutely, and was as readily reconciled; her letters flowed from the same principle; you met in the end some tender expressions, hallowed by custom, the rest had only dissipation for its object. Her husband, who was a very accomplished, sensible man, and a man of true honour, well knowing the impossibility of fixing such a character, con-

strained her in nothing, depending upon
 the natural insensibility so conspicuous in
 her: he saw he had nothing else to de-
 pend upon, and that every argument,
 however tenderly and friendly offered,
 would have little avail. Independent
 of all these frivolous and ridiculous mo-
 tives madame de Persigny had for re-
 taining a titular lover ever in her service,
 the desire of having one absolutely under
 her command, perhaps was not the least;
 and they had little room to be flattered
 with a preference, that was merely the
 decision of chance: but she was pretty
 and brilliant, and there needs no other
 requisite to make a woman sought after by
 men of the world. I was not long, how-
 ever, without feeling all the disgust, all
 the toil of a life so agitated, yet so tri-
 fling.

Madame de Persigny's imagination,
 ever wandering, rendered it impossible to
 be certain of any one pleasure with her;

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even supper, her favourite amusement, and for which she seemed calculated, was generally passed in arranging the schemes of to-morrow. Not to exhibit to the public, scenes which her folly and giddiness afforded ample matter for, and fearing I should make a part in them myself, I framed plausible pretences for many excursions into the country; always taking care to give madame timely notice, that she might arrange her parties without me. Scarce did madame de Persigny perceive my absence; I do not even know whether she had time to consider, we no longer lived together. She wanted not, however, for amiable men, ardently solicitous to replace me, who were themselves very soon after replaced by others; thus, in short, without precisely breaking with her, I ceased to be her *titular* lover. Madame de Persigny had so perfectly corrected that false delicacy in me, with which I had so shamefully tormented poor ma-

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madame de Sarenne, that the very people I before had reproached with coquetry, appeared to me now absolute prudes: it seemed as if the little blind deity whimsically designed to subject me to characters the most opposite, for his own amusement, or my punishment. While I was seeking some respite, and recovering breath from the fatigue of madame de Perfigny's petulance, I one day met at the house of a relation, with whom I dined, a woman whose exquisite beauty, graceful figure, nobleness of air, sweet (though grave and modest) countenance, instantly drew my attention; in short, my whole soul came into my eyes, where it would have remained, had not the still more powerful charms of her conversation called it into my ears: her ideas were clear, ingenious, replete with the finest sentiments, and expressed with a noble simplicity and harmony of voice peculiar to herself. Impatient to know who she was, I asked her
name,

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name, which I learned was Gremonville; that she was a *devôtée* of note, and much esteemed. Though I found her person, her wit, &c. had made the deepest impression on my heart, I did not dare ask her permission to pay my *devoirs* to her at her own house, her turn and mine seemed so incompatible; besides, I feared abruptness might cause an absolute refusal, and ruin me at once. I determined, however, to be a constant visitor at *this* house, where I found I should generally meet her. I executed my resolves, and had the happiness of meeting the divine madame de Gremonville pretty often, and of obliging my cousin beyond measure, who laid my visits to the account of pure friendship. Her manners soon charmed me infinitely more than all her other accomplishments; I beheld in *her*, simple nature, at least so strong a semblance of it, as might have duped a wiser man: she did not use rouge, which was to me a novelty, but a

pleasing one ; and there was a calm tranquillity which reigned in all she said or did, and added infinitely to those charms that stood not in need of aid ; I felt she had powers to please me infinitely. I studied her sentiments, and gave up every occupation but that of flattering her. The sensibility she shewed gave me every reason to hope I should one day reap the fruit of my labour ; yet the bare appearance of virtue had so thoroughly awed me, I did not dare declare myself, till I was further encouraged on hearing she had embraced this species of devotion merely to regain the favour of her husband, which an affair between her and a young man in his neighbourhood had caused him to withdraw from her. This first attachment convinced me she was not insensible to the tender passions ; I asked leave to visit her, and obtained it. I could not help remarking, that madame de Gremonville, besides the consideration
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and esteem of the public, had acquired an absolute empire over the mind and soul of her husband; and religious zeal is a sure means of arriving at it. The truly devout are most assuredly respectable and worthy the highest praise; the sweetness of their manners announces the purity of their souls, and the calm of their conscience: they judge of themselves with as much severity as if they pardoned nothing in others, and have as much indulgence for the rest of mankind, as if they had all their weaknesses. But women who usurp this title, are extremely imperious; the husband of a false devotée is obliged to have a sort of respect for her, from which he must not recede, whatever discontent he suffers, unless he would quarrel with the whole party. Madame de Gremonville disposed at will of a very considerable fortune: all that was magnificent and elegant surrounded her, without the appearance of any thing more

than neatness and simplicity ; one can feel it, but to explain it you must see it. She was the first of the *devôtées* that adopted the singular mode of little villas, which the public overlooked in a woman of her rank and character, as one of those whimsical caprices of no consequence, and which they can never account for. It is at these places that, under pretence of recollection and self-examination, they are left at liberty to act with too little precaution, what the very people so reserved in their censure of them, would not pass over in a woman of the world. In short, the only difference between them is in the article of hours ; you *dine* with the *devôtée*, and you *sup* with the woman of the world ; so that one house might, in some sort, serve for both the one and the other. Visits to prisoners, to hospitals, a sermon, attending divine service at some distant church, afford a hundred pretences to a *devôtée* to plead ignorance, and stop slander, when
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by accident they are known. When rouge is left off, and from outward appearance a woman is declared a *devôtée*, she may dispense with a carriage and servants following her, under pretence of concealing her good works. Thus, absolute mistress of her actions, she traverses all Paris, goes into the country alone, or tête à tête with a director; in this manner, when their reputation is once established, virtue, or rather that which resembles it, becomes the safeguard of pleasure. Madame de Gremonville began to ask me a thousand questions about the women with whom I had been connected, sometimes deploring the conduct of the women of the world, sometimes ridiculing them: she approved of my discretion about others, as it removed all fears from herself; and in reality self-love and vanity never once tempted me to break that silence a man of honour should ever keep upon such occasions; I was always more sensible of
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the pleasure, than vain of my good fortune. This turn of mine made an impression on her understanding (her heart I had before touched) and I accomplished her seduction, by redoubling my praises of her beauty, her grace, and even her virtue. I always admired the sacrifice she had made to heaven; my conversation was flattering without appearing hypocritical. I set off to her the pleasures of the world; appeared an errant slave to them; but my eyes, at the same time, assured her, I was ready to offer up ten thousand worlds a sacrifice to her. Fearing they might penetrate into the motives of my visits, she advertised me what hours were allotted to her exercises of piety, and when I might venture to go to her, and not risque meeting those devôtées, who sometimes necessarily assembled at her house, to treat about the affairs of the society; and although slander, detracting, backbiting, and evil-speaking, were by no means

means the design and end of these assemblies, it was one of those duties they best filled up. I was pretty lucky in laying hold of the time I could meet with madame de Gremonville alone. I very soon found that love insinuated me each day more and more into her confidence: her husband even marked her partiality, and used to joke with me about her: "Take care," says he, "if madame de Gremonville once undertakes you, she will convert you." All this time she had my conduct narrowly watched, and caused letters to be written to me, offering me many most agreeable adventures; but the passion with which she had inspired me, and the desire of having a devôtée, rendered me little curious about other intrigues, and produced in me the effect of prudence. In short, after having gone through the trial ordeal, and there remained not the smallest doubt of me, I obtained the honour of a rendezvous at one of the polite maisons.

maisons. I was introduced in the habit of an ecclesiastic, and this was my common disguise: the masquerade does not give more liberty at Venice, than the black gown furnishes occasion for at Paris, where every one, occupied with their own pleasures, scarcely ever think of troubling the pleasure of others. The pretext of attending a particular church afforded madame de Gremonville the means of absenting herself, and of saying she should dine at the house of one of her particular friends, in order to return with her in time for the evening service; besides every other precaution, she even took that of opening the door to me herself. We went up stairs, into an apartment where simplicity and neatness seemed to vie with each other, and where nothing useful was forgot. I very soon gave a loose to my passion, and explained the ardent transports of my heart, with less delicacy, perhaps, than was consistent with the

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the character of a devôtée to permit. "Very pressing you are," says she, "what cannot the pleasure of loving and being beloved satisfy you? I gave you this meeting, that we might pour out the sentiments of our hearts to each other with freedom, without restraint; yet the danger to which I expose myself in having you here, cannot convince you of the empire you hold in my heart: no, you love me not, you would seduce my virtue, level me with the generality of women, to be able to despise me as you do them." I employed all my eloquence, mixed with the tenderest, most soothing caresses, to prove to her the rectitude and warmth of my heart towards her. I readily perceived it took effect, but that modesty still combated with love; the latter, however, soon gained the victory, and I should have been the happiest of mankind, had not the most violent regret instantly seized her, which I used all possible means to calm, and had

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time sufficient between and dinner to remove all her doubts of my passion, and experience her tenderness for me, no longer under restraint. Our dinner was served up in one course, simple but elegant; I was treated as a favourite director. The hour for finishing the service arrived, and obliged us to part; but we frequently met, with the like precaution. The novelty of this adventure had for me a thousand charms; it bore not the least resemblance to any thing I had hitherto met with. The valets of a *devôtée* are never in her confidence, they are modest and proper in their behaviour, have none of that insolent impertinence that being in the secrets of their ladies gives them.

Madame de Gremonville, though lively in her caresses and conversation, seemed moderate in her pleasures, and to have no interest at heart, but my satisfaction, not a single view towards her own. A *devôtée* employs all the smooth, oily terms of
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the dictionary of devotion, the most affecting and lively towards her lover: the criticism on the world that madame de Gremonville made with most wit and humour, was always an elogium directed towards herself; she extolled the charms of mystery, and the most exalted delights she introduced under the name of simple conveniencies. Our commerce went on for six months without occasioning the least scandal or noise in the world; but I began to perceive a coolness and constraint in all the proceedings of madame de Gremonville, and she advanced some scruples; as they could not arise from virtue, I regarded them as symptoms of inconsistency: I have always imagined it was the jealousy of the director (prompted by some interested motives) that troubled our repose. Our rendezvous became less frequent, and the difficulty of seeing her augmented each day; and she declared, in short, that she would no longer hold
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on a commerce so criminal. I used every argument to place our attachment in a more favourable light, but in vain; she had taken her resolution, and I was obliged to submit. The only letter I had (for she never left me more than one, though this contained nothing of consequence) I returned her. Our affair ended with as little noise as it begun; but I confess I was piqued, to find madame de Gremonville could quit me so easily; above all, as she had nothing to reproach me with: I had most religiously observed all her commands, I even went sometimes (after this) to her house, to save appearances, but without marking in her the least desire of renewing our friendship, or the least remonstrance of the past. In a word, her method of proceeding to me, appeared more arrogantly presumptive than that of any other woman: she had none of that caution and management common to women so circumstanced; per-
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haps she reckoned much on my probity, and she only rendered me justice. The retirement in which I lived with madame de Gremonville made me lose sight of all my friends, and the societies I was before engaged in; I at once found myself sunk into absolute solitude, which determined me never more to risque falling into the same dilemma, but to have always a mistress *in petto*, provided I either left or lost a favourite one. I was in this disposition of mind, when I happened to have some particular business with M. De **, a counsellor of parliament, about some lands which I had a right to; as I have ever had an aversion and a natural incapacity for law-suits, and that the way to avoid them is not always to consult men of that profession, I endeavoured to find out monsieur De **, whom I knew to be a very reasonable, good kind of man. One very great advantage these gentlemen of the robe reap from their profession is, they

they learn, at the expence of others, to fly even the appearance of a law-suit themselves; therefore we terminated our difference amicably, and I remained in the number of his friends. The first mark I gave him of it, was endeavouring to seduce his wife, who was tolerably pretty; I proved successful, but I was forced to stoop to manners and conversation to which I was an absolute stranger.

The hauteur of the robe, like that of religion, is founded upon ancient custom, tradition, and the written word. They have a sort of vanity which separates them from the rest of the world; every thing that surrounds them hurts their pride. The gentlemen of the robe have ever been held inferior to the first rank of noblesse, whence many obscure, silly fellows, who could not, perhaps, get admitted into the magistracy, have assurance enough to dare claim a right to despise them, the moment they carry a sword; this is a common

mon trick of the military of the meanest extraction, but yet hinders not men of family, who would do honour to many of those who pass themselves off for people of the first rank, from putting on the gown. It is true, indeed, they are distinguished in two different classes, the ancient, who have illustrations, and are descended from the first houses in the kingdom; and those of a later date, who have a thousand times more self-sufficiency and arrogance. The gentlemen of the robe look upon themselves, and with reason, infinitely above the financiers, who are, however, far beyond them in opulence and splendour, and become, in their turn, the source of the second class of the robe. The people have for their magistrates a kind of respect, arising from a principle their ideas are by no means clear about; they regard them as their protectors, when in reality they are nothing more than their judges. The greatest part of the gentlemen

men of the robe are reduced to live amongst themselves, and that commerce maintains and supports their pride; they exclaim without ceasing against the courtiers, whom they affect to despise, though, at the same time, they stun you to death with the names of those to whom they have the honour to be allied; not a man distinguished by a title dies, but half the gentlemen of the robe put on mourning; this is a duty they discharge punctually, even to the hundredth degree of consanguinity; but very rarely do you see the magistrate wear black for his cousin the counsellor. Solicitations do not flatter them all equally, the trifling part are extremely sensible to them; but the better judges, and the most sensible, find them troublesome, and they are commonly useless. The robe in general estimate themselves too high, and others value them not enough.

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The women of this class, who live but with each other, have not the least knowledge of the world, or the manners of it; or if they have, they are false and contracted ideas: their only occupation is the ceremonial, and their only amusement low envy and detraction. Madame De * * was trained up in every capital accomplishment of the robe; and her husband, so anxiously solicitous about her behaviour, that he never ceased lecturing her upon that subject; yet her youth, and a kind of partiality which she shewed me, held me some little time; but the flatness and stupidity of the company, their vulgar pleasantries brought from the college, their pedantic manners, joined to the dulness of the house, rendered it soon insupportable to me, and I plainly saw I must seek for *amusements* elsewhere, and only reserve madame De * * for idle hours. I began to rejoin the society from which madame de Gremonville had drawn me; and no

sooner was I returned into the world, than I was asked to all the suppers of consequence, and as much carressed, nay more if possible, than before I had secluded myself from it. Paris is the centre of dissipation, and men the most indolent, from taste and situation, are there, perhaps, the busiest. My only embarrassment was how to make choice; such an infinite number of suppers were each day proposed to me, I confess I did not always find them so agreeable as they were reported to be; nevertheless, they sometimes amused me. After examining all these houses, I gave the preference to madame de Gerville's, finding it most suitable to my taste; I went there much oftener than to any other; the company was better chosen, and play less frequent: it was, in short, neither made a business of, nor a very interesting amusement. I met there at supper, one evening, madame d'Albi, and was less struck with her
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figure, which was ordinary, without being common or vulgar, than by her grace, her liveliness, her wit, and the singularity of her ideas and manner of expressing them, which, without being prudish, was simple. No body, I judged, was more proper or likely to cure and rouse me from the lethargy my commerce with madame De * * had sunk me into, than madame d'Albi; chance placed me next her at table, and the conversation, which till then was general, soon became particular between her and me, and we absolutely and entirely forgot the rest of the company, who soon begun to whisper. Madame d'Albi gave me permission to go to her house; an honour I profited of the very next day. In the early days of our acquaintance, our reciprocal vivacity persuaded us to believe no two people were ever more calculated for each other; that all with us would be perfect harmony; and we formed an attachment

conformable to these ideas. But I soon perceived she had a temper the most unequal and capricious; never did she think for two days together with uniformity, a thing displeased to-day, for the very (nay perhaps the only) reason she liked it yesterday: the liveliness of those ideas, which changed each instant their object, furnished her also with reasons the most specious and persuasive, to justify that change: when she talked she ceased to have a fault, whatever sentiments she defended we were obliged to adopt; such powers had the sagacity of her wit, the fire of her ideas, and the brilliancy of her expression.

We should imagine it impossible she could ever swerve from reason, if we could forget that the present sentiment was always a direct contradiction to that which preceded it; but the most grievous of all circumstances to me, was her heart's being ever subject to her temper, and following it into all its caprices and whims:

whims: one moment she loaded me with caresses, the next I was the object of her contempt. Characters the most opposite in themselves were united in madame d'Albi, viz. the melancholy, the gay, the thoughtless, the serious, the free and unaffected, the reserved, &c. and whichever of these she chose to put on, was always so strongly marked, that it appeared her real and natural character to them who only saw her for that instant. She one day commissioned me to look out for a *petite maison*, "where," continued she, "we may see each other with more liberty." These particular houses vulgarly called *petite maisons*, were first brought into fashion at Paris by lovers who had measures to keep, and were obliged to observe mystery in their meetings; and those who would have an asylum for parties of debauchery too dangerous to be made in public houses, and which they would blush to make in their own. Such was

the origin of these curious houses, which multiplied so fast afterwards, as to destroy the very end of them, by ceasing to be mysterious. Though the first design and use of them was to conceal certain affairs from the public, there were many who took them only to make you believe they had an affair of gallantry, or merely out of an air, as they were occupied but by people of a certain rank; but in the end they became so very common, so public, that the extremity of the suburbs seemed absolutely consecrated to them. The owners of them were known, the master's name as publicly mentioned as that of any other person, and they began to ornament them. It is most certain, that since they ceased to be mysterious they have ceased to be indecent, but they have ceased also to be useful: a *petite maison*, is now-a-days of no other use to most people, but to give them an air and appearance of seeking after pleasure; they retire to lounge away their

their time a little more secretly than they could at their own houses. I have indeed ever thought the inventor of them knew little of the human heart ; for they are the ruin of gallantry, the tomb of love, nay perhaps even that of pleasure itself. Madame d'Albi and I, however, believed we should make a better use of that we were in search of ; I took all possible pains to procure one in an obscure quarter of the town, where we were utterly unknown. I cannot pretend to paint the pleasure and vivacity with which madame d'Albi came to take possession of our retreat ; she found it preferable to the most superb palace ; we supped there, and passed the evening in the highest delight, and felt nothing at parting but impatience to meet there again, which we agreed to do within two days from that time : luckily for me, I went first to her house, instead of waiting for her at the retreat. I found her alone, but so far from the eagerness I looked for

on her part, she received me with the utmost contempt, and told me she was exceedingly surprised to find, that instead of soliciting her forgiveness for the injury and affront I had offered her, by carrying her to a *petite maison*, I should presume to propose it a second time. I confess I was astonished, and freely represented to her, that it was by her express command I had taken that house, the precautions I had used, and the secrecy with which we had met there. She replied, "Had I been tender of her reputation, I should have discouraged such ideas in her; a reasonable woman, though not oversolicitous about fame, ought never to be seen in those sort of places; and that the most secret parties are always the most maliciously interpreted when they come to be discovered." In short, there was no one reproach I was not obliged to endure on this subject. In this extraordinary manner I passed my time with madame d'Aloi;

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it seems she had ten different friends, and there were nine ever ready to supply my place. I was always on the very brink of quitting her in these moments of outrage, which happened frequently; but her wit, her figure, and a caprice still more favourable to her, brought me back again: I believe, nevertheless, my head would have been turned, if the rigour of my situation had not been a little softened by meeting with a woman who, without refining upon pleasure, gave herself up naturally, and inspired the same sort of inclination. This was the wife of a rich merchant of the Rue de St. Honoré, named monsieur Pichon, who became known to me from her husband making cloaths for my regiment. The merchants at Paris are flattered to the highest degree, at having the honour to give an entertainment to the officers whose regiment they furnish. I yielded to the intreaties of monsieur Pichon, who would absolutely give me a

supper: I engaged myself merely from complaisance, supposing I should be tired to death; but, on the contrary, I was a good deal amused, and made an acquaintance with madame Pichon; she was young and pretty, and what we call in a Bourgoise, a good motherly woman; her company was much solicited to all the entertainments in the part of the town where she lived; she sung, she danced, she enticed, she had the *repartée prompt*, more *libre* than *delecase*, you will readily believe, and the longest suppers made no alteration in either her spirits or humour. I imagined *our* genius would not be overbrilliant, or be hard pushed that night in consideration of it; but I saw in the end it was the constant custom of the house. I had set my heart upon having madame Pichon, and to bring that about, I was obliged to submit to make one in her parties, and give myself up to her society. Madame Pichon was carried away
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by a hauteur natural to all women, and which manifests itself according to their different ranks: she told me it was despising her, made me wish to conceal my visits to her; that she was pretty enough to be beloved; but if that was not suitable to my ideas, she had heretofore been the object of attention to a man of condition, &c. that whoever professed himself her lover, she *would* have behind the counter in the country, and at the houses of her friends; that, in short, she had no body to give an account of her conduct to but her husband, to whom she never gave any. I was then reduced to make one in all her parties, both in town and country. I still took great care to keep this from the knowledge of madame d'Albi, whose haughtiness would have been much hurt at having such a rival, and which she never could have pardoned. However new to me the society of madame Pichon was, I could not help sometimes

drawing comparisons between it, and those I had always lived in ; and I was very soon convinced the world differs only in exteri-
 ors, and that all are alike in the main ; the whims, the quarrels, and the menage exactly the same. I remarked likewise, that these people who enrich themselves by commerce, lose it again by their vanity : the fortunes which some merchants have made, carry them so far out of themselves, they will not deign to bring up their children to business ; whence good citizens and excellent Bourgeois are lost in mean, ridiculous pretenders to gentility ; they love to talk of people of condition, whom they know barely by name, and make histories of them which shock common sense. Their wives, no less ambitious of appearing well informed, cripple and maim their very names, confound their histories, and carry their opinion of them to such a ridiculous height, as cannot fail raising laughter, as well as contempt,

tempt, in a man of the world; and these very women, so lavish in their censure towards those of a sphere above the reach of their knowledge, are for ever attempting to imitate them; and to avoid an air which would appear narrow and confined, make use of terms the most indelicate and gross, when at liberty and amongst their intimates, at what they call their little suppers, of twelve or fifteen people. Besides, as the expence is great, they eat and drink their share out of œconomy; the fatigue and business of the week make them necessarily enjoy this relaxation, the laugh, &c. and make their days of feast, days of mirth and riot, enlivened and kept up by the most gross pleasantries.

It would not have been possible for me to sustain this manner of life much longer, had not my departure for my regiment afforded me a plausible pretence for quitting the good madame Pichon. She appeared to me so extremely hurt at my going,

going, I judged myself in conscience bound to counsel her, never more to embark with a man of fashion; I expatiated much upon the advantage, ease, and convenience of living with a man of her own sort, whom she chose from taste. She thanked me for my advice, and promised to reflect upon it; desired, however, I would visit her on my return, to save appearances; a complaisance no man, she thought, either could or ought to refuse. I acquiesced in her opinion, and forgot not to keep my word. Hitherto all the women with whom I formed any intimacy had been always dear to me, and I never met them without feeling a sort of secret pleasure; even the society of madame Pichon I turned to my advantage in the world; and I always compared it to an excellent parody, that throws a ridiculous light over a piece which seduces by its false brilliancy. On my return from my regiment, I reckoned, upon tying myself down

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down to some new intrigue, and decently quitting madame d'Albi, whose caprice I was determined no longer to endure; ignorant that she had foreseen my arrangement, and given me a successor during my absence. I was piqued at her being before-hand with me, though I had not the least inclination left for her, and had determined to break with her, but I would have done it with some sort of propriety, and that respect I have always shewn to women. I resolved to be revenged of her, and neglected nothing to renew our attachment, that I might have the pleasure of quitting her afterwards with éclat. I went to see her, she had begun to practise the tricks and caprice upon her new lover, so well known to me; he had left her in a pique, a favourable circumstance for me; I was better received, we supped together; the next day I handed her into a box at the opera, and three days after I quitted her authentically, which enraged her to
such

such a degree, that she never pardoned me. I freely forgave her, though I still reproach myself for a procedure I could never have been guilty of, had I not been hurried away by the sudden impulse of foppery. I had no sooner finished this affair, than I thought of another. A young man of the world (which I had the reputation of being) believes himself dishonoured if he remains five days without an intrigue, and without seeing the public occupied about him; therefore, to preserve my reputation, and not remain idle, I attacked ten women at one time; I writ to all those whose names my memory could trace. This method of beginning an intrigue ought to appear ridiculous to every man of common sense (I allow), yet it is, nevertheless, one of those which best succeeds with the young men of the world: most of these letters are ill received perhaps, but if one happens to prove fortunate, their labour is

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not lost, and this suffices with the current for entertaining a commerce.

The countess of Vignolles was in the number of those whom I had written to; I knew her by sight only, but her coquetry, or rather her libertinism, was so well established, she was not in the least surprized or offended at the mode of my declaration. As fate would have it, she happened just then to be without even a titular lover, and hesitated not a single moment to give me a favourable answer. I deemed it unnecessary to throw away much time and attention about her, for in effect she merited none, and satisfied myself with sending her the address to my *petite maison*; advertising her, at the same time, I should wait there in hopes of having the honour of her company at supper the evening following. She failed not to come, and had, as I imagined, so far overcome the prejudices of the world, (as women of her cast term it) that is to say, all decency and

and decorum, that she would not give me the trouble even of acting the part of a man in love; and we supped with more gaiety than if we had really been in love with each other. Her heart had no part in the false steps she made; therefore her wit, humour, and chearfulness reigned at full liberty. Madame de Vignolles possessed, in an eminent degree, the talent of ridicule, and we made a full and ample criticism upon all our acquaintance; query, whether it was not the principal motive of our frequenting the *petite maison*; where, in default of love, we adopted pleasure, and always parted well contented with each other? her lively, nay, even unruly, imagination amused me. Her person was extremely agreeable to me, and, after five or six suppers, I was very near falling in love, when I happily discovered I was the lover she publickly avowed; but the young count de Varennes was the person she preferred in secret. I would have

have put on the jealous lover, violent in reproaches, had not madame de Vignolles turned it all into ridicule, and very justly ; “ What,” says she, “ in the manner we took each other, ought you to expect or imagine my fidelity to you should be proof against any man who sought and wished to gain me ? you never took the pains even to make me believe you loved me ; it happened to be convenient to us both, neither you nor I had any other affair at that time. Behold the motives which influenced you to choose me ; I avow likewise these were mine for accepting of you so readily.” The frankness, as well as singularity, of this confession, surprized me, and very soon calmed me : there was nothing *outré* in this sentiment, my self-love only was hurt ; therefore I determined to make light of this adventure ; I only made her promise to sacrifice Varennes to me out of mere form ; but so far from keeping her word, she asso-

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ciated herself with a young man of the robe, never thinking of the past, which she regarded as a thing whence no consequences could be drawn. This adventure of Varennes had totally extinguished that species of rising passion I felt for madame de Vignolles, the other made me despise her: she was, nevertheless, become necessary to my amusement, and I could not have resolved to quit her, had I found it possible to see her in private; but this was precisely the thing she would avoid, because I was her lover avowed. Few days passed in which I heard not some of her adventures, some fresh cause she had given for scandal. Wit alone, however pleasing, never secures us, her's only helped to crush her. Besides this, I had the mortification to see no one woman would make her parties, or be seen in public along with her; even they who had declared lovers of their own, believed their conduct justified to the world by despising her.

her. At length she found herself reduced to frequent those houses easy of access to all the world, where she insisted I should follow her. We always partake of the ridicule of those we love: I did well to talk so lightly of it at first, they said, and were unanimous in believing me in love with madame de Vignolles, from having an apparent pleasure in making myself a ridiculous associate in her follies. We must not only marry to the taste of the world, but even consult it in our choice of a mistress: my present attachment was universally condemned, and my vanity had much to suffer during the three months I lived with madame de Vignolles, and determined me at last to break with her intirely. That it cost me some pain I confess; for in her I met with all the convenience and allurements of an opera girl, the *ton* and wit of a woman of the world; lively, debauched, passionate, serious, rational, and with a good deal of understanding

standing and agreeableness she united every accomplishment which could seduce and amuse. Happily, the contempt she was sunk into, furnished us with arms against her : and it was this contempt which determined me, whatever it cost me, to put an end to a commerce which now appeared shameful in my own eyes. Madame de Vignolles, grown desperate on the loss of me, omitted nothing towards bringing me back ; but I was resolved, and determined to sacrifice my pleasure to the opinion and caprice of the public : I was proof against the power of those tears spite and anger drew from her eyes, and quitted her with as much ease and incivility as I had taken her. It is usual amongst lovers by profession, to avoid a total rupture with those they cease to love ; they take the new mistress, and labour at the same time to preserve the old, and are careful, above all, to augment their list. I was too much intoxicated with the errors of the world,

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to have neglected a point so essential; therefore had always some old mistress ready to receive me without ceremony, when I had no particular attachment. These *reserved* women, are those we gain without any sort of trouble, and leave without quarrel: in short, they merit not to make a separate article in these memoirs. As I quitted madame de Vignolles purely to satisfy the world, I thought of nothing more than how to give her a worthy successor; and by that means regain the world's opinion. My choice fell on madame de Lesy; she had no other beauty but eyes full of wit and fire; she passed upon the world for wise and discreet, and was so in effect, with an inexhaustible fund of coquetry at the bottom. I met her at the ball after the opera, which was then a new thing, and perhaps the wisest establishment of the police during the regency; because it put an end to those particular assemblies, where disorders

orders frequently arose, which were often productive of real mischiefs. I entered into conversation with madame de Lesy, and profiting of the privilege of the masque, offered her my attention without ceremony: the facility with which she received it, made me readily believe our commerce would soon be established, and that I was destined the stumbling-block to her wisdom: but never was I more mistaken, she had no less than thirty admirers laying close siege to her at that time; she amused them all equally, but favoured not one of them. I failed not one day going to her house, and each day shewed me more charms in her; but my affair advanced not a tittle; wearied out at length, with that art and coquetry I could no longer be blind to, I determined to throw no more time away upon madame de Lesy, but employ it with more utility elsewhere; but, alas, she had as much art to preserve her lovers, as she had

had facility in engaging them. She no sooner perceived I was near making my escape, than she threw out every bait, and honoured me with every mark of preference, to detain me; I fancied I felt the very moment of my happiness approaching, and embarked anew, with every assurance vanity could suggest; but the success answered not my hopes, and ought to have humbled my pride. I always met at her house half a dozen, at least, of the thousand lovers who pretended to her; she was lively, talked with amazing facility, extremely agreeably and amusing; consequently satirically: she never failed making herself admired and pleasing to all around her, but had little mercy on the absent; her satire was the more cruel, as it was humorous and entertaining. It rarely happens that the absent meet with advocates, and we not only give into, but applaud too shamefully, the bitter wit of a pretty woman. I had hitherto been

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enough reserved on that head, but men the most, upon their guard are never perfectly innocent in this particular. One day madame de Lesy (in his absence) joined to ridicule the count de Longchamp; I joined in the pleasantry, but without saying any thing offensive of him: as she hated him beyond measure, she wished for nothing more than to begin again those ridiculous jokes before him, and painted all I had said in the most malicious and odious colours. He was extremely piqued, and dissembled it not; she was willing, or feigned to be willing, to excuse it, and sent for me to clear up the point in question; but the count, extremely animated, (a little perhaps by jealousy) declined entering into further explanation, and testified to me his resentment, which I answered as I ought, by promising him satisfaction. We met at midnight on the Place de Victoire, sword in hand, where I, alas, acquired but too much honour; for the count de

Longchamp fell at the second thrust: the clearness of the moon rendered it easy for us to be known; besides, in the heat of the combat he had pronounced my name: therefore his death, which happened the very next day, obliged me to abscond, and leave to my friends the trouble of accommodating this unlucky affair. No words can express the vexation, the rage, I felt on being engaged in such an unhappy affair, for the only woman from whom I had obtained nothing. I left Paris, well convinced that coquettes, however wise and prudent, are more dangerous to society, than women the most lost and abandoned: I immediately set off for Calais, where my regiment lay, and after having arranged some affairs, went over to England. The real merit of the English, justly criticised, would afford ample matter for a work, which would be both entertaining and singular; but as I talk of the women only, I shall continue a recital

of my adventures with them. The duke of Somerset, whom I had known at Paris, presented me to the king, who received me with that goodness so natural to him; I had even the honour to sup with him at the dutchess of Kendal's, his majesty's mistress. I sometimes made one in the melancholy circle of the court; I was asked to dinner by all the people of condition, and greatly astonished to see the lady of the house and all the women go from table with the fruit; I remained with the men, toasting, and hearing them talk politicks. I had the honour of being admitted into the assemblies of the ladies, and of being received at the taverns with the men. In short, I instantly adopted the manners of the English, learned their language, and corrected that frivolity of which they but too justly accuse us; and I succeeded pretty well for a Frenchman.

The pleasures of the English generally turn towards the side of debauchery,
which

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which has but few charms, and their pleasantry does not appear natural. The women are not (as in France) the principal object of the men's attention, and the soul of society. I made an acquaintance with my lady B * * *, she was perfectly beautiful, well made, and accomplished; that haughtiness, which she joined to an air of the utmost disdain, after having disgusted and piqued me; both my heart and vanity were interested in such a conquest. I found I must conduct myself with art, and hide my real sentiments from a woman of such a turn of mind, and began my attack by seeking to merit her esteem, and adapted my conversation to her taste, by retrenching the *bagatelles* which so strongly mark us Frenchmen; I endeavoured to express simply my sentiments, with a peremptory, decisive air, and succeeded so well, that lady B * * * took uncommon pleasure in conversing with me. The first mark of favour she conferred

on me, was talking French, a thing she never could be prevailed upon to do; but she still preserved that air of coolness and importance she had enjoined herself. I shewed not much eagerness or impatience about her, I judged it would not turn to my account; above all, as I never saw her alone, I passed three months without reaping any other fruit of my labour, than that of being suffered, and never seeing a rival. I did not dare to tell her that the indifference with which she saw me was become insupportable to me: I had not as yet acquired a right to complain. Wretched and despairing, I was on the point of giving all up, when one of my people acquainted me there was a hackney coachman below desired to speak to me; I ordered him up stairs, and he told me a woman waited for me in his coach at St. James's gate. I went with him, unable to devise what could have drawn on me such a rendezvous; but what was my surprise,

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surprize, my astonishment, on opening the coach door, to meet my lady B *** hid under her hood; she bid me come into the coach; I readily obeyed, and she ordered the coachman to drive us to the place she had directed him. I would have talked, but she imposed silence: we arrived at length in the city, and entered by a back door into a house, the outside of which was very simple: she led me into a most magnificent apartment, however, which she had the key of. I testified my gratitude in the most lively manner, and I plainly saw she would receive all the marks of it that love could give. "You ought, you must undoubtedly," says she, "be astonished at the strange and imprudent step I have taken to-day." I would have answered her, both out of duty and love. "Be content," replied she, "I have loved you long." "Loved me long!" returned I with vivacity; "why did you not give me some proof of it? what

have you not made me suffer!" "We will not talk of the past," says she, "I have examined your conduct; you had a friend in my heart that pleaded much more strongly in your behalf, than you would have dared to do for yourself; but the step I have taken this day must alone convince you of it; my life, my fortune is in your hands." I failed not to profit of so favourable a confession; I found this beauty who had appeared to me so reserved, so cold, so haughty in public, so lively, so passionately tender in a tête à tête; I had some difficulty to persuade myself my happiness was real, and I awake. We parted after such reciprocal protestations and vows of fidelity as the most sentimental and sincere friendship could dictate or demand, devoid of the cold insipid jargon of gallantry. "Do not expect," says she, "I should ever give you in public the smallest testimony of all you have inspired me with; if you would con-

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tinue to please me, be as much upon the reserve in the world, as if nothing had ever happened between us. I shall be enabled this night to form some judgment," added she, "of your discretion, in a circle where I expect to see you, but I shall not even look towards you; yield then to act from my sentiments, which nothing can ever change towards you; leave to me to inform you of the days and times I can see you, be it here or be it there: I will contrive to have my letters safely conveyed to your hands, you will have nothing to do but to answer them." A considerable time passed without the least failure or abatement in our attachment; but jealousy, that bane of love, broke in to trouble our repose. Particular business brought a French lady (related to me) to London, who instantly became a subject of jealousy to lady B * * *, the dreadful consequence of which merits a particular place in my story: lady B * * * never

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threw

threw out the smallest reproach or suspicion, but I remarked in her an uncommon ferocity, accompanied with an air of the deepest melancholy; yet far from attempting to bring me back by reproaches, a greater share of vivacity, or throwing a ridiculous light over the object of her disquiet, she even avoided naming her. Unconscious as I was of ever having erred towards my dear lady B * * *, and totally ignorant of her suspicions, I could not, nor did not, dream I was the cause of her uneasiness, till I received a letter from her, the purport of which was, that, transported with rage and vexation, each to a degree of madness, at my perfidy, she had determined to put an end to a life I had rendered insupportable to her, but not till after she had torn out mine; that she was at that instant reflecting on the time and manner of executing her resolves. Well knowing how heartily the English despise death, from the almost daily examples of
their

their administering it to themselves, in the most horrid shapes, I shuddered on reading her letter, and instantly answered it; intreating, nay ardently conjuring her, to give me a meeting at our place of rendezvous. My letter wore a face of candour, simplicity, and innocence; I loved her, I was incapable of deceiving her; and tho' the beginning of this love affair would not prejudice one much in its favour, the sincerity tempts us to pardon the harshness of it, and a lover is extremely flattered at inspiring sentiments so determined: she consented to the meeting, and the moment I saw her I endeavoured to undeceive her; but her heart, her very soul had run through such variety of torture, such perpetual agitation, as could not fail leaving an indelible mark on the wretched mind doomed to sustain it; her love, her pride, had received too severe a blow, in the first and only alarm she had ever known. I saw her tost about with every

gust of passion, and, though a woman, I knew her resolution would yield to none, consequently foresaw a storm approaching; but how, or in what manner it would burst, was beyond my utmost reach of thought. After having given me stronger testimonies of her affection than she had heretofore done. "Tell me," says she, "do you sincerely love me; I would not be flattered, answer me with candour." "Can you doubt it?" replied I; "my love for you constitutes all my happiness: yet I will frankly own to you my mind is ill at ease; I have not been perfectly satisfied since I have observed your thoughts greatly occupied about something you industriously conceal from me. You cannot but imagine it must wound my delicacy, as well as my pride: open your heart then to me, mine merits its confidence." "It is to discover to you its inmost recesses, to shew you my whole soul," replied she, "that I trust you hear this day;

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day ; I have long been jealous, that is saying all in one word, to explain my sufferings ; and since these forest of all sufferings cannot force me to quit you, I see plainly I must love you while I live : yet I feel I have been most injuriously treated, and will by no means subject myself to future affronts. You are carried away by gallantry ; you would have me love you, but you will not cease to be unfaithful to me ; my heart will not be satisfied with divided love, it would possess you wholly, free from the fear of losing you. London is become odious to me, I can be no longer happy, nay easy in it : behold, *if you will follow me, I will go to the very verge of the universe ; I am resolved, if you refuse, your love is feeble, and your heart unworthy of mine.*" This wild scheme both astonished and hurt me ; but unwilling to oppose with too much violence, sentiments so tender, so flattering to me, I remonstrated on the engagements she had made

made with her husband; the noise her elopement would make in the world; adding, that my fortune was too inconsiderable to permit me to expose her in any country where I had no resource. She listened to me without interrupting me, but when I had done talking, "I have," says she, "both considered and well weighed all my engagements to my husband, which in my eyes appear no more than a civil contract. I have no children, I made my husband's fortune by the riches I brought (and which I shall leave) him, but I have a considerable estate in Jamaica, entirely in my own disposal, I mean to sell it, and that we should immediately go about it; we can bring away the money, and retire to any part of the world, any place that best pleases you; to me all countries are equal, that which you choose will instantly become my native country; I live but for you, and am very little anxious about the *éclat* my departure may

may make. But tell me with the same sincerity, shall you regret your country? such an attachment as that would deviate very far from love, and even from reason: reflect how this country of yours has banished you for having sentiments, the privation of which had dishonoured you. Can we regret men whose ideas are so false, so despicable? If you love me, I should suffice you; love ought to destroy all prejudices; my plan soars above the mark of you Frenchmen, and may consequently astonish you, therefore I require not an immediate answer; I will allow you eight days to consider, during which time I shall see you, without asking you the smallest question about the party I have proposed." In saying these words she quitted me, and left me overwhelmed with trouble, embarrassment, and wonder; my integrity, my honour, my honesty revolted at the party lady B * * * had proposed; but the excess of her passion softened

softened me, and redoubled my attachment to her. I saw with grief, that my refusal would hurry her into some violent measure terrible to both. In this racking frame of mind, I went to the abbè du Bois, who has since then been made a cardinal, and who was at this time *le chargé d'affaire* from France to the court at London. He soon perceived my trouble, and pressed me to let him into the cause of it; his character, or turn of mind, bent more towards intrigue than negociation, soon enabled him to discover my whole adventure; he had indeed often questioned me about it, but I resolved him no further than was allowable in a man of honour to justify his own taste. The abbè, of all men living, harboured the worst opinion of women; viewing them all through the same medium with those wretches that formed his connections, and had not the least consideration for lady B***; but for me he had great regard
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and affection, and that induced me to open myself to him on this interesting occasion. This affair appeared to him of the utmost importance; in England all is party, and the women are not less attached than the men to either the one or the other of these parties, which unfortunately divide the whole kingdom, and are distinguished by the appellation of whig and tory: lady B * * * was of the last; and the regent had at this time measures to keep with *them*. The abbè, sensible of the noise an affair of this nature would make, above all, perpetrated by a Frenchman, dreaded the consequences which might ensue, in the then circumstances of his negociation, and neglected nothing that could induce me to return to France instantly. I urged the risque I run in returning *there* before my affair was accommodated; upon which he offered me a letter to the duke of Orleans, assuring me, *that* prince would soon terminate my affair to my satisfaction: see-
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ing I hesitated to follow his counsel, he enforced it with menaces; and the menaces of politicians are too often serious. In a word, the abbè forced me to leave England without seeing lady B * * *, and permitted me simply to write to her: I told her, in terms the most passionate, my heart's sufferings, the regret, the torture I felt at the necessity of tearing myself from her; and assured her no power upon earth, nor any one thing, but the reproaches, the ruin such a procedure must bring on her; the self-condemned wretch I must ever after remain, for accepting a proposal so injurious to the too fond, too partial heart that offered it, and opposite to every sentiment a man of honour should cherish; that I left England with a soul, a heart penetrated with her generosity and uncommon goodness, which neither time, absence, nor distance could ever obliterate from my memory. My return proved fortunate; the regent (as the abbè had
assured

assured me) felt for my situation, and my unlucky affair was happily and speedily terminated. A very few days after my arrival at Paris, I received a letter from lady B * * *, filled with all that enraged, neglected love could inspire; she finished by bidding me an eternal adieu, and I learned very soon after, that she had put end to her life. This dreadful news plunged me into the deepest sorrow; I was no longer sensible to the joy of being restored to my native country: I accused myself a thousand, thousand times of the most barbarous cruelty; the image of the dear, unfortunate lady B * * * was ever present to my mind, and even to this day I cannot reflect on her without emotion. My friends left no means untried to draw me from a retreat where I had determined to end my wretched days in silence and solitude, and to dissipate the gloomy impressions of a melancholy they dreaded the consequences of; it was merely from complai-

complaisance I at this time yielded to their earnest intreaties and their counsels; but the happy effect of them upon my mind made me soon look through reason's eye, and deliver myself solely up to her guidance. Beside the particular motives I had for vexation, it is morally impossible not to contract the manners of the people with whom we live; the serious air of the English (which they bear about them even in the midst of their pleasures) had not a little infected me. But the air and the amusements of France are excellent remedies for this malady; no sooner did I return to society, than my taste for the women awakened. I was at first a good deal embarrassed about my person; but I luckily met with some of my former mistresses, complaisant enough to be pleased with me; and I clearly saw we may reckon upon the constancy of women, even those women from whom we do not require the bare appearance of fidelity. A

new conquest was, nevertheless, necessary for me ; but after a whole year's absence, I found myself greatly embarrassed ; it was a sort of beginning the world again. I must, I knew, be attentive to the choice I made, since upon that, and that alone, my future successes would depend. Madame de Limeüil appeared to me at that time the only woman worthy my attention ; but from reflection and experience I had learned how to suppress the first transports of a rising passion : she was young, and passed for wise ; she might have been so in effect, had the world not turned her head by talking of her. To attack unsuccessfully must lose me for ever : a fashionable lover ought never to undertake doubtful consequents.

Whilst I was (by these judicious reflections) combating the passion I already began to feel for madame de Limeüil ; the wit, the eloquence, the judgment, and, above all, the merit of madame de Tonins, engrossed

grossed all conversation; her society was esteemed the first in Paris, and happy were they who were permitted to make part of it; not the men only, but women of the first fashion and most respectable characters were indefatigably assiduous in paying their court to her. Some of my friends offered to carry me to her house, and I hesitated not a moment accepting an honour the whole world seemed ambitious of obtaining. Madame de Tonins received me most graciously; we found her in a circle of wits and men of the world, ingrossing the conversation, and making them listen to her with the utmost attention. I found in reality in madame de Tonins, and some few more of her little court, much of what the world calls wit; that is to say, great facility of expression, the brilliant and the sprightly; the last of these talents they appear to me to abuse shamefully. The conversation I interrupted was a sort of dissertation
upon

upon metaphysics; to enliven the matter, madame de Tonins and her favourites took care to strew, from time to time, among their learned discourses, scraps innumerable of epigrams unhappily chosen, the conceits low and trifling. This whimsical mixture astonished me; nevertheless, I was extremely dissatisfied with myself, that I could not be amused, when all the rest of the company laughed or applauded to the greatest excess every syllable that was uttered; and I faithfully believed it was my fault, or rather misfortune, to want taste to relish a conversation which struck the rest of the world with admiration. I asked madame de Tonin's permission to pay my court to her frequently, which she not only granted, but invited me to supper the following evening. In order to avoid the fatigue of form and returning visits, as well as to give herself an air of higher consequence, she affected ill health, and rarely left her own house, which

which soon became the rendezvous of all whom she would permit the honour of paying their court to her. I made my visit early the next day, and met nearly the same company I had seen there the preceding; the same topic of conversation was likewise resumed. In less than an hour I perceived it began to languish, and proposed a party at cards, less from taste than habitude; but madame de Tonins told me, with some warmth, play was absolutely banished her house, as meet only for those who knew neither how to think nor speak; "It is," added she, "an amusement which idleness and ignorance renders necessary." The remark was just and sensible; but unhappily madame de Tonins and her *coterie* were (spite of their boasted wit, &c.) frequently reduced to that necessity, as to need the aid of a card-table, and experienced that the obligation of being always witty, was to the full as great a slavery, as being always at play.

Play

Play became a subject for a dissertation which held till supper; at table the conversation took quite a different turn, every thing tending towards dissertation was banished, and from the moment we set down no person was permitted to converse but in *bon mots*: Madame de Tonins and her adorers took the lead, and starting at the self-same instant, there flowed such a torrent of quibbles, puns, and extravagant fallies, accompanied by excessive laughter, as must have shocked the understanding and delicacy of a Samoid or Hottentot: they extracted from the elixir the worst part, and raised its value from its obscurity; I tried to understand them, so as to be able to enter into their jests; but no sooner had I found a word to put in, than I found the topic of conversation totally changed. I entreated the person next me to relieve me from this embarrassment, and lend me his aid towards understanding, at least, what they said. He began a discourse

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(laughing

(laughing the whole time) much less intelligible than all that had before been said. The immoderate laughter this excited, served but to disconcert me the more, and I was for a moment or two tempted to take it seriously; but fearing to render myself ridiculous, I resolved to answer them in the same stile, although it appeared to me detestable. I gave myself over to my natural vivacity, and by some turn or stroke pleasant enough, I made reply to those who hurled their darts at me: madame de Tonins applauded me, every one followed her example, and I became the hero of that buffoonery I had before been the victim of. Supper over, we talked of the two new romances, and a new comedy which had been acted a few times; my opinion of them was asked; as I had been ever more sensible to the beauties of a performance, than to the pleasure of pointing out faults, I answered naturally, that in the two romances, I had

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met with many things which afforded me singular pleasure ; and that the comedy, without being an extraordinary good piece, had yet many and great beauties. Madame de Tonins took up the conversation, to criticise on what I had happened to praise ; determined to defend my sentiments, I looked round for some one who might possibly be of my opinion, ignorant that one opinion only reigned in this society. Madame de Tonins, little used to contradiction, maintained her opinion with bitterness and malice ; and the whole company joined in applauding without ceasing, every syllable she uttered. I wisely determined to hold my tongue, perceiving (though rather too late) that the rule of this little republic was to blame in general all that did not arise from it, or that was not immediately under its protection. I learned this truth from the extraordinary praises she lavished on three or four pieces, which, in my eyes, as well

as those of the public, appeared even below the *middle* class of scribblers. I resolved to avail myself of this discovery, and adapt my future conduct, as well as my conversation, to my company : I had more complaisance for the sentiments of madame de Tonins, from those she had inspired me with. Without being absolutely young, she was still amiable : besides, the consideration she was held in, however unmerited, was the thing which piqued my taste. Opinion determines us to the full as often as love ; she was in fashion, therefore appeared to me most charming. Though I did suffer myself to be imposed on so far by the respect she was held in, as to believe her inflexible, I was, I confess, a good deal embarrassed how to proceed. At length I fixed my plan of operation, and went to her house early enough to find her alone, and declared to her my passion, which neither offended nor embarrassed her. “I

shall not," says she, "employ that art, that dissimulation common to women on these occasions towards you : I am not insensible to your passion, your figure pleases me ; I esteem your character, your wit amuses me ; but before I can listen to your sentiments, you must be made thoroughly acquainted with mine, and, let me tell you, this is giving you very early a strong mark of my confidence. There are two things I am equally sensible to, and which I intend to reconcile, although they appear incompatible, viz. pleasure and reputation ; by the manner of life I have embraced, I am making advances towards an honourable retreat, against the time when I shall no longer be allowed to pretend either to youth or beauty ; a woman has then no character to take up but that of a genius, or the devout ; the latter party is too opposite to my taste, I should never be able to sustain it ; whereas by embracing the character of a genius,

I can now play the prudent part, without being obliged to renounce my pleasures; in which, however, I would preserve all possible decency and decorum. There are few women who would not be flattered by your homage, and who would not perhaps glory in it; but for me, I would take my lover without noise." I approved of madame de Tonins' plan, threw myself at her feet, and promised her inviolable secrecy and discretion, if she would grant me her indulgence. "Softly, softly," replied she, "your conduct must first prove to me the sincerity of your professions." In this instant the whole world broke in upon us, and I withdrew. I laid close siege, however, for fifteen days together, without being able to vanquish resistance; at length she believed my passion real, and consented to my happiness. Our attachment remained a most profound mystery pretty near a month; and the moment the society perceived our intimacy, they redoubled

doubled their attention to me, shewing me on every occasion the same regard that madame de Tonins testified for me; they found in me a thousand times more wit than ever; but I was little sensible to the honour of being called a wit, a character which formerly people of condition did not dare aspire to; they felt they did not take pains sufficient to cultivate their genius, so as to allow them any just claim to that title; but they had a particular respect, and consideration for men of letters. Since that time men of condition judge it advisable to run the *career* of the *belle esprit*, at the same time they are absurd enough to lay themselves out to turn it into ridicule. But far from harbouring such false notions, I always believed no man so great, as not to acquire additional honour from the title of a man of wit and letters; though I was sensible I had neither talents nor erudition to merit it. The rage for acting plays reigned

then in Paris, we met theatres every where; madame de Tonins' *coterie* took the same turn of pleasure, but pushed their ambition still higher; and to fill the measure of ridicule, would act nothing but what was entirely new: almost every actor was the author of the part he played. Our representations (for I was soon admitted into the troop) were extremely dull, and tiresome to the last degree, but the audience were polite enough to hide their disgust, applauding loudly, and condemning silently. Madam de Tonins insisted on my writing a comedy. I honestly represented to her how incapable I was; she blamed my modesty, and assured me, with her instruction, I would soon make an excellent author: not in the least believing this, but from their complaisance, I set to work. Just at this time Dufresnoy (who was a little engaged in our set) proposed that we should make an essay on our theatre of his comedy, *du Mariage fait et Rompue*, before

before he offered it to the public. It was accepted of, and joined to mine. Ten or a dozen choice spectators were admitted to this rehearsal; my play succeeded to our best wishes, Dufresnoy's was pronounced detestable. I was so scandalized at the absurdity of such a decision, I could not help patronizing Dufresnoy's comedy: the disputes on this subject grew so warm, and were carried so high, that madame de Tonins absolutely insisted on my play's being given to the French comedians, at the same time with the *Mariage fait et Rompé*: in vain did I oppose it, by remonstrating to her the ridicule such a procedure must expose me to; that men in my situation, and of my rank, were never formed to become authors, and seldom or ever succeeded when they attempted it; and that if they did turn authors from complaisance, for the amusement of their own society, they should never allow their performance to appear in public. She cited

many examples of men in a similar situation, who had braved with success these prejudices, and promised me I should never be known as the author of this piece. Although these reasonings were barely plausible, I was obliged to submit to them all; and the two comedies were played at a few days distance of time, the one from the other. Dufresnoy's met with the applause it merited, continued to be acted, and was always received with pleasure: mine, the author of which they did not know, was found very tiresome, the pit despairing they should ever be able to interest themselves enough in it to laugh, nay even to smile, were unanimous in damning it: the *bon ton* and wit, so much admired at madame de Tonnins', had no effect when brought upon the theatre. Without oratory, little solidity, a few pictures of a select society, which could not be understood at first, and were hardly worth the trouble it must

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cost to unravel them, was not very likely to produce any thing worth hazarding the opinion of the public on. I saw clearly that men of the world, for want of study and exercising their talents, are rarely capable of forming a complete piece, such as the theatre requires: they compose as they play, ill in the general, and tolerably in some particular parts. Indeed, in some characters it must be allowed they are infinitely above comedians by profession; but upon the whole, the action and the piece are always bad: a general knowledge of the action and its union they never acquire. The vexation of seeing myself an author in despite of me, the necessity of admiring every thing that flowed from our society, above all, from madame de Tonins, very soon gave me a disgust, both to her and the geniuses. It was then I begun to know in reality *madame* and her little court, and to perceive each society (particularly that of the

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geniuses)

geniuses) believe they compose the universe; and that I had vainly taken for the general applause, the sentiments of a few only, who the significant, imposing air and confidence of madame de Tonins had seduced and prejudiced in my favour. The impartial public (far from improving) condemned my comedy with all the ridicule it deserved. The right we usurped of judging and deciding, without appeal to either men or books, our affected contempt for those who reduced our society to its real value, were causes sufficient to excite the pleasantry and satire of the whole world. Besides the ridicule I shared with the community, particular jokes were levelled at me. "Madame de Tonins," they said, "who had the gift of dispensing wit to whom she pleased, could not refuse it to him who had the honour of being first in her good graces." From henceforth our society was no less tiresome than ridiculous; I was stunned to death

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at hearing nothing talked of but the comedy, the opera, the actors and actresses. It is said the dictionary of the opera contains no more than six hundred words; that of the men of the world is still more contracted. All these murderers of wit serve but to disgust genius, cramp the understanding, encourage pretenders to wit, flatter the pride of fools, and enrage the public. I yielded myself up to vexation and rage, and quitted madame de Tonins rather abruptly, returned to the world, well convinced that all tyrannical societies, infatuated with their own wit and consequence, are (as they ought to be) odious to the world, and often an insupportable burden to themselves. To cure myself radically, and disembarraß my head from the noxious vapours of the geniuses, I resolved to live some time in the finance; and this remedy I found successful, but it is by no means infallible. I must confess, until that time I had entertained
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very false ideas of the financiers in many respects; but the finance is not at all at this day what it was formerly, when a man of what condition soever he was, threw himself into business, with a firm resolution of making a fortune, without any requisite but a fund of cupidity and avarice; no delicacy about the sordidness of the first employments; a heart divested of all scruples as to the means, and inaccessible to remorse after success. With these qualifications they could hardly fail of obtaining their end. The newly rich preserved their first manners; they put on a savage pride, of which their treasure was the measure; were humble or insolent, according to their losses or gains; and their merit was, in their own eyes, like their money, (of which they were idolaters) subject to ebbs and flows. The financiers of these times were little communicative; distrust rendered all men suspicious in their eyes, and the public
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hate placed a barrier between them and society. They are now-a-days very different, most part of them enter into the finances with fortunes made for them, and there is some care taken of their education, which in France is always proportioned, more or less, according to their birth. Is it then astonishing, that we sometimes meet amongst them very worthy, friendly men? There are many of them who love and cultivate learning, and who are sought after by the best company, and who will receive no other at their own houses; which has greatly lessened the prejudices absurdly conceived against the whole profession; and the ridicule thrown on it now, arises from habit merely, not from that indignation which their odious, and unfair dealing in business, formerly had scattered over the whole community. I am well aware no person has yet dared to speak in their favour; but I, who report things freely, and fairly as they strike

strike me, fear not to shock the prejudices of those who stupidly declaim against the finance, to which they owe, perhaps, their very existence, without knowing it. A court of exchequer is absolutely necessary in a state; and the dignity, or meanness of the profession, depends entirely upon the manner of executing it: and in giving those who acquit themselves with honour, the just praise they merit, I must avow I have met with many financiers, who preserved both the sentiments, and manners of their ancestors; and those we find amongst them of low, sordid dispositions, have heads too weak to sustain the idea even of their opulence, and have in general been the first authors of their fortunes. These indeed are servile, cringing, insolent, avaricious, magnificent, as interest or caprice directs; and, by the by, through this despicable channel I made my way first to the finance. Mr. Ponchard, whose wife, chance had thrown in
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my way, at the instant I was in search of an antidote against the poison of the *belle esprit*, was precisely the thing I wanted; one of the new raised, newly preferred gentry; sprung from meanness, raised by degrees from the lowest, vilest employments, to the head of affairs; he was interested in every thing he did, and failed not to decorate himself, so soon as he had achieved his fortune, with the title of farmer general. His wife, of as mean extraction as himself, was a compound of vulgarity and vanity, uncorrected by education. Great fortunes are often begun in the provinces; but it is at Paris only they completely finish the play. Monsieur Ponchard made up his gains at Paris a million of crowns, and his wife acquired as many ridiculous and impertinent fopperies; her whole employment was to embellish herself with the airs of women of condition; but unfortunately she could not catch those graces which can only
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make them pardonable in women of fashion: as she had remarked that almost all the women of the world had their lovers, she would likewise have her's. In this disposition I met with her, she judged me worthy of her, and the facility of the conquest determined me perhaps the sooner; because she was well enough as to her figure, though she was not handsome: every thing has a language peculiar to itself, that of opulence was to me unknown, and I had time to study it under Mr. Ponchard; he talked not but of gold and silver, as a country gentleman talks of nought but genealogy; his manner of conversation was sanguine, his temper decisive, and his greatest triumph was at his table; there, it must be allowed, amidst the most profuse plenty, delicacy and elegance reigned throughout: there appeared likewise some taste in the finishing and fitting out his house; but that we necessarily meet with in all the houses of the
 opulent

opulent in Paris; owing to the great facility with which they find (however rough and homely they may be) men who make taste a profession, engage in their service; yet still this is but a borrowed taste at best, and often serves no other purpose but that of making us feel more sensibly the rustic origin of the owner, not so easily fashioned as his household stuff. As to madame Ponchard, her whole occupation was studying and copying the airs of the great; but unfortunately she always caught the ridiculous part of every character, and notwithstanding her pride and consequence arose from the fortune of her husband, she blushed, and was ashamed of his person. This horrid connection brought me acquainted with the whole finance: I visited at many of their houses, whence I could draw no comparison advantageous to the Ponchards; though indeed to disgust me, there needed nothing more than madame Ponchard herself; a very little
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more would have led me to regret madame de Tonins, and prefer the absurd and ridiculous, to the insipid vulgar. Madame Ponchard looked upon a lover, as a necessary appurtenance; my attachment flattered her vanity, she wished to have me ever with her: my sentiments about her were very different, and I very soon began to neglect that devoir toward her, which I had never been over exact in fulfilling. I was *obliged* to pay my court; I would live with my friends; and Mrs. Ponchard grew extremely dissatisfied with my conduct. The wife of a financier delights in receiving the name of a courtier who is attached to her; but is infinitely more flattered to have him seen with her in public. They make frequent parties into the country, where they give suppers; all the rest of the women have their lovers along with them, while they are reduced to talk of theirs. At long run they feel this situation injurious, that

that it gives the rest of the society a bad impression of them, and that it is well enough to have a man of fashion to please their whim, but not to depend upon. Good sense at length got the better of *her* vanity, and without giving me my *congè*, Mrs. Ponchard gave me an associate; a young clerk, whom she had put in some of the under offices, and to whom *she* was a dutchess. I took all possible care to avoid noise, and reproaches, and quitted her in the most secret manner; I had not even so much consideration for her, as to break with her in form, and we insensibly found ourselves disembarassed from each other, and enjoying perfect liberty.

THE
COUNT DE—'s
CONFESSIONS.

PART II.

IN spite of the dissipated life I led, I contracted many friendships; the commencement of some I owed to pleasure, but I can with truth say, I preserved them all by the stability of my nature, and honesty of my heart. I was wild, but not vicious; my passions often conquered my reason, but never my integrity; from *that* I suffered not myself to swerve in the smallest tittle, not even on the most interesting occasion. The tenderness we conceive for a mistress should
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be ever subordinate to the duties, the ties of friendship, where much more constancy, much more fidelity is required than in love; the latter too frequently arising from passion only, the former must have its source in reason.

When I would judge of a man's character I have not had leisure to study, I always inform myself whether he has maintained his early friendships; a rule of judging from, that has rarely (if ever) deceived me. Of the friends innumerable which I made, I had the misfortune to lose but one, and him by an adventure singular enough to merit a recital. Senécé was one of those to whom I was united by pleasure; the principal marks of his character were, a facility of disposition, a good nature carried even to weakness, with a heart naturally upright; his bad or good qualities depended on his connections; attached to nothing by his own taste, he delivered himself up totally to that of others, and

and accepted with the same indifference an invitation to the house of mourning or a party of pleasure. He assisted at every thing, but proposed nothing; because he was actuated only by a desire to please: he was free from every embarrassment, as he conformed himself to all our sentiments, which, by the way, were not always so uniform as our taste: in a word, he was the most complaisant of friends, and love rendered him the most abject of slaves. I had observed for some time past, that Senécé was by no means so constant to our party, or indeed so punctual to any of his engagements, as he had ever before been. I told him of it, and he confessed to me he was in love, even to a degree of madness, and no less vain of his passion, since it was for the most amiable, the most respectable of women. If the elogiums of lovers in general had to me been always suspicious, those of Senécé (who never found fault with any body) were a thousand times more so. He offered to

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present me to his mistress, telling me at the same time, that he had already spoken of me to her as his particular friend, and would answer for my being perfectly well received. — I embraced his offer, and went with him to her house that very day. This masterpiece, this paragon of perfection, of whom he had so extravagantly vaunted, was a woman of about forty years of age, who had still the remains of beauty, without ever having been agreeable; there remained likewise of her former attractions, an air rather more than confident, which heightened marvellously the nauseous insipidity of a worn-out tainted coquette.

Madame Dornal (for that was her name) gave me a very kind reception, although she insinuated to me, I ought to be sensible of a preference she gave me above many others, who were extremely desirous of being admitted to her house, where all the company were *selected*. I was not much

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much flattered by this mark of distinction, yet I failed not making my acknowledgements in terms the most polite; but I confess I never had the least inclination to abuse her goodness, from the permission she had allowed me; and latterly I went to her house merely to avoid the importunities of Senécé. I soon found out the character and turn of madame Dornal; my indignation was raised to the highest pitch, to see an accomplished, brave, and worthy man, blind enough to attach himself to such a base, contemptuous being. Although the dame Dornal was herself meanly born, and her husband a man obscure enough in conscience, she had the folly to attempt passing herself on the world for a woman of condition, and talked of her consequence with the same success as the rest of those impertinents, who always tire but never persuade.

The brilliant circle of her house was reduced to five or six old gamesters, and

some few tiresome people, who were good for nothing but to live with her. As for the husband, he was a sort of idiot, one would, without ceremony, have thrown out of the window, or given orders he should be locked up whenever his presence could incommode. All these together (you will readily believe) could not render a house very amusing; but had the company been ever so entertaining, ever so capable of drawing me to the house, the mistress of it was enough to disgust every man of honour: she was, in short, a composition of falsehood, envy, malice, and impertinence. In her youth she had many admirers, but never loved any one of them; her heart, made up of vice, was incapable of tenderness; she would have been too dangerous, had she had parts, happily she had none; she pretended, however, to an uncommon degree of understanding. She must needs appear lively, imagining *that* would give her an
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air of youthfulness and wit; but, alas! her vivacity served only to render her follies more conspicuous. The blindness of Senécé amazed me beyond measure; that he could attach himself to a woman without so much as youth to recommend her, whose soul was black enough to deform even beauty itself. I looked upon it as a duty indispensable, to open the eyes of my friend; to shew him in the clearest light my reason could suggest, the misery of an attachment, which must in the beginning render a man ridiculous, and in the end despicable. Well aware of the danger and delicacy of such an undertaking with a man in love, I was not a little embarrassed; the only thing which did, or could, perhaps, have determined me, was the observing that Senécé was insensibly breaking with all his friends, and particularly with his family. That it is not always necessary to make our relations our bosom friends I will allow, in decency we

ought to live with them as *such*, and hide from the world all domestic dissensions. Senécé had with his sister (a most respectable woman) a dispute which occasioned a great noise, and all the world blamed my friend. I clearly saw that this scandalous procedure of his was the work of madame Dornal; she knew well enough the facility of her lover's disposition, to dread the influence of his friends, and resolved to secure her conquest: as she had not youth enough to ensure his constancy, she set out by estranging him from all those whose counsels could frustrate her schemes and plan of operation. I had the honour to be no less suspected by her than the rest of his companions, and she made some attempts to ruin me with Senécé; but whether she found him too much prejudiced in favour of me, or held it more prudent to gain me over to her interest, I know not, but her conduct towards me changed instantly; there was no advances she did not make
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me, no servility she would not stoop to, barely to please me: but, alas! it only served to strengthen the contempt, nay abhorrence, I had already conceived for her, and determine me rather sooner, to awaken my friend, if possible, from the lethargy he was unfortunately sunk into. I talked to him without reserve, and made him feel (at least I endeavoured to make him feel) the injury she did him; and I found I was not the only person who had given him a lively and just representation of his mistress; for, interrupting me hastily, "I see," says he, "you are no less prepossessed against madame Dornal than the rest of the world; is it not permitted me to have a mistress? I am but *too* happy in having been able to make *her* my friend. Poor madame Dornal is very unfortunate, that with such a heart and nobleness of sentiment, she can have nothing but enemies. And let me add, you are peculiarly ungrateful to her; she loves you, and I

am myself a witness, that she never forgets or neglects any thing that can contribute to your pleasure or good." I suffered Senécé to run on as fast and as long as he pleased, but no sooner had he ceased, than I resumed the conversation in the terms following: "My morals, you know, are those of a man of honour and a man of the world, consequently never severe upon love. Can I be angry at you for being in love? it would be to the full as reasonable to reproach a man for being ill. Notwithstanding your present attachment appears ridiculous in all eyes, we should rather pity than blame you; it is being but too happy, you say, to meet with a friend in a mistress: I grant you, it is the consummation of all earthly bliss, to taste in one and the same person the pleasures of love and the sweets of friendship; to meet at the same time the tender mistress and the faithful friend; I should desire no other felicity. But unhappily, my dear

Senécé,

Senécé, this is a situation you can never pretend to with Dornal; believe me, a man in love makes his mistress; love is a blind impulse, always taking for granted the merit of its object: we are happy but from opinion, and our hearts are not at our own disposal, but we are accountable to the world for our friendships; love forces himself into the heart, friendship merits it, and is the fruit of esteem; but Dornal! is *she* worthy it?" I then drew him the picture of his mistress; it frightened him because it resembled her. "We have much cause to lament," added I, "when we are ill-fated enough to love the object of universal contempt: but allowing we want resolution to conquer so shameful a passion, the least we can do is to conceal it from the world; but it seems as if you affected to shew yourself about with her; we see you together at all the public places, though she is absolutely unable to get any one person to accom-

pany her, except those few you either take by surprize or a forced complaisance. I am not the dupe of her interested politeness, which she did not put on until she had perhaps vainly essayed to destroy me in your opinion: I should be equally vexed to find her sincere, since her friendship could only be troublesome, and her esteem dishonouring to me. I have, I confess, talked to you with abundance of frankness; but as I am the only one of your old friends who has been seduced into this house, I grieve, lest I should be suspected of approving your commerce. Your part is to make your pleasures and duty you owe to yourself accord; gratify your inclinations, but suffer not this woman to tear you from your family and your friends." Senécé remained some time speechless; at length he said, "If I knew her better, I should cherish sentiments very different of her:" in short, he seemed confused, and much more afflicted

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than converted. The goodness of his heart, which did justice to my intentions, kept him from flying into a rage, as most lovers would have done; but nothing I had said appeared to have detached him in the least from his mistress. It was highly improper I should continue to go to the house of a woman I thought so very ill of; therefore I left off visiting her; that is to say, I never went but when Senécé dragged me there. She made me some reproaches, and it was very apparent he had told her my motives for staying away, as well as the rest of our conversation; for she changed at once the pleasing reception she was accustomed to give me, into marks of hatred, as sincere as her former friendship was false. I was charmed, and absolutely left her off; nevertheless I saw Senécé constantly, he feared talking to me of his mistress, and I never once named her to him. I found him from time to time melancholy and pensive: I

really loved him enough to be extremely interested about his welfare, and one day asked him the cause of his chagrin. His extreme embarrassment made me partly suspect the truth; and after much evasion he confessed to me he had sometimes very disagreeable altercations with his mistress, that she treated him frequently with a great deal of haughtiness, and even rigour. "That is to say," answered I, "you are in absolute subjection, and yet this woman is not content to have such a lover as she could no longer reasonably pretend to, but she must become his tyrant." I would have recalled to his memory our former conversation, but he interrupted me; saying, "You teach me nothing in all these lessons but what I well know, and which has been often told me: I feel with you, and all the world, the contempt she merits, which completes my misfortune; I despise her and I love her." "In that case," returned I, "I can only pity you; but
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I should imagine, nevertheless, there can be no great difficulty in breaking an engagement that makes one blush." "This is not all," answered he, "I dread her, she is an extraordinary character, a woman of strong passions, capable of pursuing the most violent measures. I let her know I was quite worn-out with her tyranny, and upon the point of freeing myself. She told me, without dissimulation, my infidelity should not go unpunished; and that there was no means (however cruel) she would not have recourse to, to be revenged." "How impertinent is this on her part, my dear Senécé," replied I, "and ridiculous on your's; you will not find her so determined, neither does she believe you so timid." "Pardon me," cried Senécé, "she has penetrated my fears." "Doubt not then," said I, "she is capable of committing those crimes, when she is unworthy enough to pardon your suspicions,

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or ever to see you afterwards; and if there needed any thing further to convince you of it, her menaces should do it; but the best and easiest way to break with her, is never to see her more." He sighed and coloured. "I am," replied he, "enough humbled, not even to fear being more so, and will honestly own I am not detached: I cannot forbear regarding these transports as effects of her passion for me. I am persuaded she does love me, and we ought to pardon many things to love; her heart is mine alone, and there is not that person on earth she prefers to me." "I believe," said I, "you may assure yourself of her constancy, without being suspected of vanity and self-love. She must have a lover, destiny alone threw you in her way; but if she loses you, dare she flatter herself that a second miracle will be wrought in her favour, to give you a successor: behold all that attaches her to you, not as a lover, for she

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is incapable of loving, and unworthy of being beloved, but as a fury that fears losing her prey. I am not prejudiced in favour of myself, yet spite of the horror with which I flatter myself I have inspired her, I am certain I could supplant you, without having any thing on my side but novelty." Senécé held my temerity ridiculous, and all our conversation had little avail; for he returned that very night to Dornal, and supped with her. I had some thoughts of executing what I had advanced, as the only means I had left to undeceive and cure my friend. After the first conversation I had with him on the subject of his mistress, I resolved never to speak to him about her for the future; as I saw that the errors of my friend constituted his happiness; but when he made known to me his real situation, and I found that this unworthy attachment, which rendered him despicable, did not render him happy, I thought of nothing more than tearing off those shameful

ful chains he groaned under. The difficulty was to see Dornal again; chance brought that about; I one day spied her out at the comedy, in a box with Senécé, who hid himself in one corner of it; for, to do him justice, he then coloured on being seen with her; I feigned to have seen him only, and that I came to desire he would give me a place in his box. My arrival disconcerted both the one and the other; I saw in the eyes of Dornal all the heart-felt rage with which the sight of me had inspired her, and that with much pain she kept it from breaking out: nevertheless, it did not hinder me from taking the place I had asked, and which Senécé dared not refuse me; as I had a point to carry, I winked at the ill grace with which she received me; and during the comedy offered her many little politenesses, which begun to calm her; I augmented them by degrees, and whether she attributed my behaviour to remorse for
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having displeased her, or that she rather chose to gain me, than to have me to fight against, in the heart of Senécé, she finished by giving me a welcome flattering enough. I offered her my hand to conduct her to her coach; she accepted it, and asked if I would not sup with them. I consented, and poor Senécé seemed overwhelmed with joy. Supper passed off tolerably; I made her many advances, which were not ill answered on her part, and we separated better friends than we had ever been; I was still better received the next day. I maintained the same conduct towards her for some time; I left nothing undone which could persuade her I was in love with her. I paid my respects in the absence of Senécé, and found she made my visits a mystery to him. He told me he lived much more tranquilly with her, and that if she continued to treat him with the same tenderness she then did, he should be the happiest of mankind. I was not
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at a loss to account for the change, but I kept it a profound secret from him; it was not yet ripe for a discovery. But when Dornal believed she had made a sufficient progress in my heart, she ventured to open her's to me; she made many complaints, and reproached me with the things I had said of her to Senécé, who it seemed had weakness enough to tell her of it. I failed not to profit of this opening she had given me, and freely confessed more than she had charged me with; adding, "That jealousy alone would have inspired me with much more, had I not withheld its force." Then feigning I was unable longer to conceal my passion, I told her, blushing, I had loved her from the first moment I saw her, and that I could no longer support the happiness of Senécé; that I must confess I had made every effort in my power, to disgust and estrange him towards her; from despairing of being able to supplant him otherwise.

I re-

I remarked how eagerly Dornal swallowed the poisoned cup I presented to her, with eyes glancing tenderness. She replied, "that she had been very unjust in regard to me; and she could no longer blame me, since love ever carries his excuse along with him. And had it been possible (through the disguise I wore) to penetrate into my real sentiments, she had most certainly preferred me to my friend, whom, notwithstanding, she once sincerely loved; but for some time past he was scarcely worthy of that tenderness; and this joined to an homage such as mine, could not fail of determining her to abandon a lover, in every respect so much my inferior." She pronounced these last words with a blush, hardly consistent with *her*. I threw myself at her feet, and she gave me to understand by her acknowledgments, she was ready to engage with me: The preliminaries of an intrigue languish not with such a proficient; all delays would have

have carried an air of childishness, the *virtuous* Dornal was far from adopting, and a few days settled our affair. It was agreed, she should give to me the first night Senécé spent at Versailles : but what was very singular, he never was so content and satisfied with his mistress as when he was absent from her. This turned not to my account ; to execute my project, it was necessary he should be jealous : I affected before his face an air of great familiarity with his mistress, but unsuccessfully ; we darted such looks at each other as unveil mysteries, and betray lovers ; but all this passed unheeded by the tranquil Senécé. He told me one morning, that he reckoned upon going to Versailles the next day, about some affairs of the regiment. I avoided meeting him again, or supping along with him that evening at Dornal's. I made no doubt she would inform me of his journey, and determined to subject her to the necessity of writing

to me: I did not deceive myself, for I received from her the next morning a note extremely gallant; nay plainer still, for in it she not only gave me a rendezvous for the night following, but mentioned Senécé with contempt, and gave me assurances of a passion the most violent. I instantly went to Senécé's house, talked to him of his journey to Versailles, with an air the most interested, and so much the more suspicious, as it ought to have been to me indifferent. I marked it drew his attention, and when I had led him on to the point I had in view, I left him; but in pulling out my handkerchief, I purposely let fall Dornal's billet; I perceived him eager to pick it up, impatiently waiting to see my back turned, to seize it with greater security. I doubted not this billet would have the effect I desired, and prepared myself accordingly for my rendezvous, which I had in reality no great desire to profit of. But I was fully

satisfied, the only way to undeceive my friend was to place before his eyes an adventure pushed to the last extreme. I went to Dornal's house at midnight, with an affected air of mystery. Senécé, who had supped with her, was going away; he got into his post-chaise, and made as if he was setting out for Versailles; but about the middle of the street he alighted, and returned on foot within four paces of the house, where I perceived him keeping the watch. I seemed not to notice him, and went in. I found the faithful Dornal in a most elegant dishabille; in her there wanted nothing but youth and beauty, and in me love. I felt some remorse, reflecting on the part I was going to act; but it was soon overpowered by the laudableness of the motive. I made no doubt that Senécé would instantly follow me, and my conjectures were right; he entered the moment after me, and concealed himself where nothing could either

escape

escape his eyes or ears ; and when Dornal's transports grew too violent, and he heard her pressing me to take his part of her bed, he presented himself before us. Rage held him some time silent and immovable ; Dornal was extremely disconcerted, and I put on the appearance of being so too, Senécé, in short, regarded me with eyes full of fury ; “ Is it you, perfidious friend,” said he, “ who partakes the infidelity of that unfortunate ?” at the same time drawing his sword and pointing it at me ; I had nothing to do but to stand on my guard, and parry the blow he aimed at me ; but the audacious Dornal took courage again, and in an instant seized him ; asked him by what authority he came to her house, and raised such scandalous tumults, then ordered him to quit it directly. Nothing can equal the astonishment this piece of impudence threw me into ; but it was still augmented upon my seeing its effect. These words,

which

which ought to have raised the fury of Senécé to its highest pitch, imposed upon him. Dornal continued to hear him with all imaginable contempt, and I beheld him trembling before his worthless tyrant. Seeing he had no more to fear, I went away, and waited in the street to see the end of this adventure; I waited a full hour, but no Senécé appeared: unable I was to divine what could keep him; I did not think the proceedings of Dornal needed so long an explanation. Wearied at length with fauntering about, I retired to my own house. The next morning I sent him a detail of the whole affair, and I gave him an exact and true account of my conduct, and my motives for it. He returned no answer to my letter; and some few days after I learned that he continued his visits to his mistress. It was not possible for me to conceive how, or which way, she could justify herself, or that he could be weak enough to pardon her. He has industriously

ously avoided me ever since; and after many fruitless overtures on my part, I gave up the research. I have learned that Dornal's husband died rather suddenly, and that Senécé has had the cowardly meanness to marry this vile creature. He was what the French call *parfaitement bonnet homme*; had many estimable qualities, besides being my friend: I could not help pitying him, and thinking he was too severely punished. This adventure has taught me how impossible it is to reclaim a man thoroughly subdued and conquered; and that the most despicable women are generally those whose empire is the most permanent. If the felicity of life consists in passing it with a woman whose sentiments justify our taste to the world, surely the ignominious slavery of being subject to the caprice of a woman who disunites us from our friends, and who sows discord and trouble in our families, must fill up the measure of human misery; and I

grieve to say, there are not wanting many examples of this kind in Paris. The intrigues I was myself engaged in, prevented me from thinking more of this adventure; I had three mistresses at this very time, and it required very superior talents to preserve them all, that is to say, to *deceive* them all; to make each believe she was the only one. A woman needs very little penetration to suppose she has rivals; but the assiduity, the attention with which a lover acquits himself, prevents their being over-sanguine on that head. I tired of one very soon, and quitted her; because she was what we vulgarly term too wheedling, too fawning. A woman of this character, or rather of this species, has neither principle, passions, nor ideas; she is incapable of thinking, yet believes she *feels*; her heart and her head are equally cold and barren, occupied by trifles only, and talking common-place stuff, which she takes for new strokes

strokes of humour; repeats over and over again, the *minutiae* she was struck with: she affects to appear well informed, and believes it absolutely necessary; hurry, bustle, and noise are her element; dress, ornament, and deciding upon the mode, make the business of her life: she would break off the most interesting conversation, to say the taffety of the year was frightful, and scandalize the taste of the nation: she takes a lover as she chooses a gown, because he is in fashion: she is troublesome in business, and tiresome to the last degree in parties of pleasure. The trifling woman of quality is distinguishable from the trifling Bourgoise, only by a better manner of expressing herself, and the difference of her objects: the first talks to you of a jaunt to Marli, the other tires you with a detail of a supper in the gardens of Paris. There are likewise trifling men to be met with in each class. I very soon after broke with another of these la-

dies, because I learned the loved nothing so well as play: it was not from being piqued on finding I was not her only passion, but there is nothing so disagreeable as not to be able to depend on an engagement, and she constantly sacrificed all others to the first party at cards that presented itself; besides, I never went to her house, that I did not meet with some of these pretended countesses and marchionesses, and indeed sometimes with real ones, who dishonour their name and rank, by the unworthy commerce they hold. A woman who gives up her house to play, generally engages in more trades than one; but this is not what most displeases me; the acquaintance we make amongst women, however low and bad, we may disavow, as times and circumstances differ; but we should be much more delicate and circumspect in forming connections with men; and I unfortunately met, at the house of my mistress, with many of

of those knight-errants who are reduced to show away, and live brilliantly at Paris, wanting wherewithal to subsist on in their own province, and which the *bad* humour of justice obliges them sometimes to fly from. Scarcely had I quitted this curious set I have been speaking of, when I was forced to sacrifice another of my mistresses to propriety; her name was Derval, she was what we call a good woman; she had an upright heart, a good natural understanding, free from affectation, with great candour in her proceedings. It was as necessary towards her existence that she should love, as it was that she should breathe; love in her derived its source from nature, and rested not on any fixed object. A lover she must have, be he whom he would; her heart was unable to support a deprivation. She would have ten lovers, one after another; and provided they could succeed each other without any interval, I question if she

would have perceived the change: she was sincerely attached to the present favourite, and preserved sentiments equally tender for his successor. Madame Derval's figure, which was charming, always insured her a lover; and the inconstancy natural to happy lovers, made her very soon lose them; but the present quitted her only to make room for another, whose happiness was as sure, and his constancy as weak. Besides that it was the fashion to have had her, and I would indulge my whim, I regarded it as an affair of a few days only; but the goodness of her temper, her complaisance, her attention, the caresses she bestowed on me, her ardency to please, held me insensibly; I took her from caprice, but attached myself to her from taste. I had lived with her above two months, without ever once dreaming of quitting her, when I received a letter conceived in these terms: "When you took madame Derval, sir, I had the same intention,

intention, but you were before-hand with me: your whim appeared to me altogether natural, and I determined to wait until it was over, to satisfy mine; but such attachments ought to be exhausted in less than two months; such a length of time favours of love, nay even constancy. I always hoped when you quitted madame Derval it would be my turn to succeed, and in that confidence parted with a mistress I should otherwise have kept. You are too gallant to break the laws of society; render then this woman to him she belongs to. You ought to feel the justice of my demand." The singular stile of this letter made me instantly fly with it to madame Derval; but what was my surprize, when, from her obscure and equivocal answers, I saw it appeared to her altogether as natural as it was indifferene! From that moment I felt my fault, and endeavoured to make reparation, by delivering up madame Derval to society that

very day, as an *effect* in commerce to which they had an equal right with me. Although I lived in the midst of pleasures, in what one calls good company, I was too dissipated not to be known (at least) to the bad, which can never happen with impunity to a man of fashion; if on his first appearance in the world he gains the approbation of it, it will suffice; he will continue to have it, even though he should no longer continue to merit it. The moment a man has arrived at this precious title, he is run after by all those women who are more anxious to be known than esteemed, and who, it is most certain, are never determined by esteem, nor even Love himself; but often follow from fashion, the man they despise, although they prefer him to a lover who has no other fault than that of being a worthy, honest man, ignorant of the *beau monde*. One would imagine the indiscretion, the perfidy and base proceedings they meet with,

was

was punishment sufficient to cure their folly; far from it, they have no characters to lose; all they desire is to appear on the theatre of the world, and the *eclat* which would make a reasonable woman blush with shame and despair, consoles them for all. The girls who live by their beauty have the same ambition as women of fashion; the conquest of a celebrated man, not only sets a higher price on their charms, but raises them to a sort of rivalry with certain women of condition, who but too nearly resemble them: so that you frequently hear the same names mentioned by women who were not born for the same society. Besides these settled affairs, I was sometimes engaged in those suppers of licentiousness, which we frequent, purely to make ourselves amends for the constraint laid on us by women of virtue and honour, if we dare to offer them a reproach so ill founded; instead of adoring that sentiment, that rationality in them,

them, which brought, at least, to excite in
 our breasts an ambition to become worthy
 of them. In these parties I became ac-
 quainted with those few beauties which
 either misery, libertinism, or seduction
 furnish the debauched at Paris with; and
 I solemnly declare, I never met them
 without a secret repugnance: these me-
 lancholy victims of our whim and caprice
 always presented to my mind the image
 of unhappiness, never that of pleasure.
 I beheld myself an object of the entice-
 ments of the coquette, and to the less
 equivocal declaration of many other wo-
 men. These intrigues, which had for
 some time amused me, appeared ridicu-
 lous to me in the end: I perceived the
 contempt that men of sense, even those
 who loved pleasure, entertained for a man
 of fashion, and began to blush at a title I
 partook of with the most despicable of
 mankind. A life of more tranquillity
 presented itself to my mind, and judging
 it

it would be more conformable to my real sentiments, I resolved to live for the future more retired. An adventure which just at that time happened to me, completed my resolution of yielding to the inclination of my heart. I had often those sort of letters addressed to me, which persons known at Paris, from their love of pleasure or their large fortunes, are sure to have the honour of receiving; the subject and stile is always the same. A young and amiable person ventures to declare, with timidity, an unconquerable passion she has indulged for you, and offers you her favours at a reasonable price. I used to divert myself with these billets, which was all the answer they required, at least when we do not accept of the proposal. But I was one day exposed to a trial much more seducing; my valet de chambre entered my apartment in the morning, rather early, and told me there was a woman meanly dressed, who had waited a long

time to talk to me upon an affair which she could, she said, communicate to me only. I gave orders she might be brought into my apartment, and we were left alone; I waited some time for this woman to tell me her story, but in my life I never saw embarrassment equal to her's; all that misfortune, shame, misery, and humiliated virtue could inspire, was painted in her countenance; she frequently opened her mouth to speak, but her words always died on her lips. Her situation touched me, and I sought to remove her fears and raise her spirits, by testifying a sensibility that might encourage her to speak. After many efforts to hide from me the tears that, spite of her, abundantly fell, she told me, in low and broken accents, she was in the greatest misery; that she had lost her husband, who supported her by his labour, and was obliged to sell all the little necessities she had left, to pay some debts; that she had a daughter, about sixteen

sixteen years of age, which filled up the measure of her sorrows, by the tenderness they had for each other, and the impossibility there was of their being able to subsist together. Here she stopped, the tears she had endeavoured to suppress, fell in greater abundance, and choaked her voice. Moved with compassion by her discourse, her situation, her countenance interested me in her favour; I used my utmost efforts to hide the concern I felt, that I might be the better able to calm her tortured mind, and engage her to proceed. I asked her what it was she desired I should do for her. "I have been assured," (replied she, with fresh trouble, which seemed to augment each instant) "there are people of large fortunes who would be very glad to have the care of girls that have no other resource than charity; and I am come, sir, to implore your's. I am very sensible," continued she, (bathed in tears) "in what acknowledgments I engage my poor, unhappy

happy daughter; but I cannot resolve to see her die, thus loaded with misery." These last words cost her more than all the rest, scarcely could she articulate them; shame made her cast her eyes downwards, and I really felt myself at that instant as great an object of compassion as she was. She blushed the whole time, at a conversation so humiliating to her; and that, the revolvings of nature in herself made her undoubtedly find was offensive to me. I penetrated her whole soul, and her sentiments found the way into my heart. I endeavoured to console her, but as I found my mind ill at ease, I gave her all the money I had about me, and sent her away to breathe in freedom. How misfortunes inspire gratitude! I had all imaginable difficulty to avoid the excess of her thanks: as soon as she was gone, I reflected on the wretchedness of her situation; on the combats her heart must have sustained, before she could prevail upon herself to make this

this false step; and above all, how much our virtue depends upon our situation. I spent this day as usual; that is to say, with the same people, and in the same pleasures; but I was ever crossed by wandering thoughts; the impression this unfortunate woman had made on my mind would not let me rest in tranquillity: I returned to my house, my mind continually occupied by this image of woe. Next morning the same person was announced to me; ignorant of the cause which could bring her again, I ordered she should be brought in; she came, followed by a young girl, I readily judged to be her daughter. I was still in bed; they both advanced towards me, and the mother again poured forth numberless thanks for what I had the day before given her: the daughter, who remained silent, only joined the mother by the most submissive air. I had time to examine her, and never in my whole life had I beheld any thing so amiable.

able. The surprize she caused in me, prevented me imposing silence on the mother, and I let her talk on without even thinking what she said to me; so thoroughly was I struck with the beauty of her daughter; candour, virtue, and innocence were painted in her face. We see none of these physiognomies in the world; features the most regular, the most seducing, retained their lustre, spite of dejection and trouble of mind, and that paleness which might naturally have extinguished it. She had hardly strength enough to support herself; she breathed but in sighs the most profound. I bid her come nearer to me; she approached me trembling, and her fears appeared to me excessive. "What alarms you, madam?" said I, "has some fresh misfortune befallen you? What cause brought you hither?" "That of shewing our gratitude," replied she hesitating. "You have shewn much more already," answered I, "than a simple act
of

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of humanity could possibly merit; you must have some other cause, some nearer affliction, speak to me with confidence; all the acknowledgment I ask from you is to let me know sincerely your present business." Instead of returning an answer, she fixed her eyes on her mother, and wept. The mother, who could not restrain her tears, took her daughter in her arms; they held each other in embraces so close, as if they feared being separated for ever. "I knew not, for some time, what to think of grief so immoderate; at last I began to believe I had divined the cause of it, and turning towards them, "Ought you to apprehend," said I, "that I would dare to abuse your misfortunes? is not such an idea most injurious to me? tell me what has caused your present fears." "Alas! sir," says the mother, "I believed I had brought Julia to join my acknowledgments to our benefactor: neither the one nor the other of us dared to consider it in any other light

light but . . .” I instantly interrupted her; her embarrassment but too well explained her ideas. I thought I ought to spare the misery of the mother, the modesty of the daughter, and myself the pain of a further explanation. “Talk no more,” said I, “of the trifling succours I have given you, you owe me no obligations; I now offer you every thing you can have occasion for; encourage sentiments more consoling to yourself, more flattering to me, and less injurious to us all.” I observed a serenity at once light up their whole countenance, particularly the daughter’s, which I could consider with more freedom and attention when my presence no longer made her blush, or rather when I perceived the emotions she felt, (though not less sanguine) were derived from a different source, and no longer painful or humiliating. They threw themselves on their knees at my bed-side, shed a torrent of
tears,

tears, though from a different motive; they talked both at once, and confused their acknowledgments, by their eager desire to express them; in short, it seemed as if their hearts, overflowing with joy, burst into tears, and wished to shew that way, what was above all power of expression: their discourse was wild and unconnected, understood only by their transports. "What!" cried they, "Heaven offers us a benefactor in whom pure generosity . . . great God! how happy, how blessed are we . . . what goodness . . ." They took me by the hand, Julia squeezed it, bathing it with her tears; gratitude and virtue rendered her prodigal to me of those caresses which her modesty would have shuddered at, had I ventured to put it to the test: innocence is often more bold, than vice is daring. I was softened with this spectacle, and it was with difficulty that my eyes refrained their tribute. I made them rise from

from their knees, and obliged them to sit down, and again enjoined them silence; but I plainly saw the violence their gratitude suffered in obeying me. I could not forbear admiring the beauty of Julia; nevertheless, I declare solemnly, this charming figure inspired me not with a single wish or desire injurious to her honour; a sentiment of respect for her misfortunes and her virtue had shut up my heart against all others. I again enquired into their situation, and they both entered into a detail of what the mother had the day before told me, viz. that her husband had an employment upon which they lived, and which was all their fortune; that had it not been for his sudden death, Julia was to have married a young man she extremely loved, and by whom she was no less beloved. Julia coloured, and the mother, being desirous to give this young man the praises he so justly merited at their hands, Julia seized the topic, and enlarged

on all she had said, with so much vivacity, that I fancied the mother accused me in her own mind, and but too justly, I with some degree of envy. I asked, if this young man had always persisted in the same sentiments? if their change of fortune had not changed his heart? "Oh! my God! no," replied Julia, "his manner of proceeding towards us since the death of my father, well merits my esteem." "He has shared with us," added the mother, "the revenue of a little employment he has; but I can perceive it extremely incommodes him, without being sufficient to furnish us with those necessities of life which I see he deprives himself of; this it obliges us to have recourse to charity." I ordered them to come to me the next day, and bring him along with them; but this was not done, without first imposing silence on them from those acknowledgments which was ever ready to fall from them. My mind

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was much more severely agitated this day than it had ever been heretofore; the beauties of Julia were ever present to my eyes. I could not but remember she *loved*, and that it was natural *she* should be beloved; that love was born of inclination, fortified by habitude, nay, perhaps by misfortunes, which unite, little by little, those who have no other riches, no other resource but their hearts. The kind, the good offices of this young man ought still more to attach his mistress, by the ties of gratitude; his services were infinitely superior to all I could offer, all I could render them; she would cost me but little, but *he* had sacrificed the necessaries of life. How happy did this lover appear to me! these ideas occupied me continually; I found I was afflicted, at least unquiet, and I feared lest any sentiments of jealousy might slip into my heart, but very soon recollected myself: I judged that the sentiments with which Julia had inspired me, though

though tender, were of a nature very different to love; however handsome they were, however violent my passion for women, their honour was perfectly secure with me. I made it a rule all my life, never to search for any, but those who run foremost to their defeat; I looked upon it as the worst sort of rape, to abuse the situation of the unfortunate, who were born for virtue, and whose unhappiness alone betrayed them to ruin. But whether it was virtue or self-love in me, I had hitherto been humane only, I would likewise be generous, and resolved to reverence two happy lovers, to unite them, and to partake of their felicity, from the pleasure of giving it, by insuring to them their fortune and establishment. We are never virtuous without reaping the fruits of it; and I had no sooner formed this plan in my mind, than I felt that tranquil delight, which ordinary pleasures cannot give. Julia neglected not to come along
with

with her mother the next day, to present to me her lover. He was a very fine figure, and appeared to be about two and twenty; as Julia had informed him that I wanted to see him, only to do him service, he saluted me with that timidity natural to all worthy, honest men, who have favours to ask or to receive. I asked him what was his employment? he answered my question ingenuously, and I could not conceive, from the account he gave me, how he could find wherewithal to subsist upon himself, much less how he was able to administer to the wants of others: nothing but love could have found superfluity, within so narrow, nay bounded, a pittance. During the time he was talking to me, I observed that Julia never took her eyes from him, but to regard me now and then with much attention; she feared he would not please me, and sought to read in my eyes what impression he had made on me; and I had no sooner assured

assured this young man, that I was equally satisfied with his figure and his discourse, then I saw the highest joy diffuse itself over the whole countenance of Julia. I asked him, if he had not always persevered in his design of marrying her? Instantly seizing the conversation, "My blessings on earth, undoubtedly," replied he, "depend on my being united to Julia, if I could but make her happy; I covet riches, only to offer them to her; but, alas! I have none, and I could never forgive myself, were I to cause her misfortunes." "If this fear," said I to them both, "is the only obstacle to your union, I will charge myself with your fortune." In this moment Julia made such lively acknowledgments for my goodness, and the favours, she said, I had already bestowed upon her mother and her, that I clearly saw she felt much more gratitude for the offer I had made her lover. He told me, the great goodness I had shewn

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him,

him, and the many benefits I had showered down on them all, would be rendered still more precious to him, if he could have the honour of devoting his future days to my service; an honour he would willingly sacrifice his employment for. An idea just then struck me, and I made my arrangement accordingly. The greatest part of my fortune lay in Brittany; I had *there* a very considerable landed property; the dissipation I lived in at Paris, scarcely allowed me time to look into my own affairs, and the people in the province, to whose care I had intrusted them, acquitted themselves but very ill. I asked them all three, whether it would be disagreeable to them to go and live at my estate? where I would give them a very good appointment, and where they should have the entire charge of my affairs. The young man assured me, the place in the world most pleasing, most happy to him, was that where he could live with Julia; and that

that he preferred to all other employments the felicity of being attached to me. Julia and her mother declared the same sentiments, and in a few days after I united Julia and her lover. I obtained for them as considerable an employment as they were able to manage, without neglecting my affairs, and sent them away to Brittany. Nothing ever gave me a more lively image of perfect happiness, than the union, the transports of these two young lovers: they experienced, along with their love, no other sentiments but those of gratitude, which they vied with each other in shewing me; and I never in my life felt a pleasure more pure and more substantial, than that of having caused their happiness. The author of a benefit is he who gathers the sweetest fruit; it seemed as if their situation reflected its influence on me; all the pleasures of sense fall far short of those I experienced: there must certainly be in the heart a particular sense,

infinitely superior to all the rest. I have had no cause to repent the confidence I placed in them relative to my affairs; but I have a much more real and sensible obligation to them; for to them I owe, in some measure, the change which from that time took place in my heart; their situation made me wish for one equal to it: I found a void in my soul, which all my false pleasures could not fill; their tumult numbed my senses, but did not satisfy them, and I felt I could not be happy unless my heart was really filled. The very idea of this happiness rendered all my former pleasures odious to me; and to avoid importunity, I resolved to go into the country, to the house of one of my friends, who had a long time solicited my company, at a place he had a few miles from Paris: I there met the countess de Salvé; she was then about three and twenty, had been a widow two years; she had been sacrificed to the interest of her family,

family, in marrying the count of Salvé, an old man, of a temper extremely severe, and jealous; from having spent most part of his life in that sort of bad company that know not how to esteem women, conscious of his own disagreeableness, he envied others to a degree that rendered him ten times more insupportable. Spite of all repugnance, the young countess did every thing the most rigid virtue could exact; she could not give her heart, but she fulfilled her duty, and her conduct made her respected, but could not make her happy. I hardly knew her, she had lived but little in the world, and when I accidentally met her, the gravity and importance of her air imposed much upon me; the women with whom I generally associated, had scarce any resemblance to madame de Salvé, which had made her always appear a character too reserved for me to approach, nor was I then fond of the trouble of pursuits that were likely to

prove abortive. But my disposition changing, I saw her with more favourable eyes; her conversation, joined to that ease and familiarity inseparable from a country life, and which is the charm of it, made me know her better, and to be known must always turn to her advantage; as she did not marry from choice, she supported her widowhood with more decency than parade of affliction, and appeared constantly in her real character. The countess of Salvé had more sense than wit, if one may be allowed that distinction; or, more properly speaking, her wit was rather just than brilliant; her conversation had in it none of those flights of fancy which at first dazzle, and then, fatigue you: we were never struck with astonishment at what she said, but we always approved it. She was esteemed by all the estimable part of mankind, and respected even by those who had the least pretensions to it; her person inspired love, her

character

character was formed for friendship, her esteem presupposed virtue; in short, the fairest soul was united to the most beautiful form in madame de Salvé. I very soon perceived all she was, and felt it still more; I became enamoured without knowing it, and loved with passion, when I thought I simply respected her. I was not, however, long ignorant of the nature of my sentiments. I had been some days in the house with the countess, when she gave orders for her carriage to be got ready for her return to Paris. I was greatly afflicted at this order, without knowing why; but I soon felt the motive of my grief; I had too much experience of my heart to be long ignorant of its situation. I loved with more passion than I had ever done, and the thought of the countess's going away before I had declared my passion, threw me into absolute despair, but happily for me, my friend prevailed on her to stay two days longer. Determined

to avail myself of this unexpected piece of good fortune, I attempted to speak to her; but never in my life did I know a more embarrassing situation; I, who had a thorough knowledge of women, who had been accustomed to live with them in the greatest familiarity, hardly dared open my lips to the countess. Let not the women complain of the men, they are but what they themselves make them. I was a thousand times on the brink of explaining myself to madame de Salvé; respect still kept me silent, and I could not, in short, get the better of my timidity; I therefore took the resolution to shew her my sentiments by my conduct, without daring to avow them; and contented myself for the present with begging her permission to wait on her. I saw my request embarrassed her; instead of giving a positive answer, she told me her house would ill suit my taste; the retirement in which she lived would hardly be agreeable to a man

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of the world, so generally known in it as I was. This answer approached so near a refusal, that I would not press her for a clearer explanation; and determining to construe it into a permission, I answered her only by those vague politenesses which say all one would have them, because they say nothing. Madame de Salvé went away the next day, and I did not stay long after her: I was no sooner at Paris, than I went to pay my respects to her; she seemed surprized, but received me politely; my visit was short; I made several others not much longer, for fear of becoming troublesome, before I obtained the privilege of going to her house with freedom. My visits became more and more frequent; all other places grew distasteful to me: in short, I lived at the house of madame de Salvé. My friends, (I mean, my former companions) complained loudly against me; said, they never saw me, or if they did, it was only

for a few minutes, and that I appeared absent even then: we were ever at variance when we met, yet their efforts to bring me back were not very violent. The most commodious and agreeable part I know of these societies (which pleasure and dissipation alone unite) is the great ease with which they connect and separate; they shew great joy at first meeting, but little eagerness to bring you back; they take their acquaintance without choice or election, and lose them without giving them up; they enjoy the pleasure of meeting, without once desiring it, and absence totally obliterates you from their memory. I enjoyed then unmolested the happiness of seeing madame de Salvé: she saw very little company, therefore opportunities presented themselves by thousands for me to discover my heart to her; but whether the certainty of having it always in my power prevented my doing any thing rashly, or whether the respect with

which she at first inspired me, still awed me, I know not, but I dared not hazard a confession. I never found any difficulty in making these sort of declarations to the women I was not in love with; and in the moment when I felt (what I had so often feigned) a real passion, with all the force, the power of Love, I was unable even to pronounce his name; I did not, I could not, absolutely tell madame de Salvé I loved her, but the whole of my conduct amply proved it. I perceived that my sentiments had not escaped her penetration. A woman is never offended (though sometimes displeased and embarrassed) by declarations of love; because they seem to require a return, and always suppose hopes of obtaining it. The most probable means, however, to succeed with madame de Salvé were, I imagined, to endeavour to make myself master of her heart before I ventured to ask it. I besieged her above a month with uncommon assiduity, omit-

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ting no one thing that could recommend me to her favour, or convince her how highly she reigned in mine, and I should perhaps have held on the same conduct much longer, had not she herself offered me an occasion to declare myself. She one day told me, she was surpris'd a man so dissipated as I was, could live the length of time I had done in a house so retired, so little amusing as her's. "It ought at least to convince you, madam," replied I, "that dissipation is less the mark of pleasure than inquietude, in a man who seeks felicity without being able to find it; since I have had the honour and happiness of making my court to you, I desire no other." "I fought not," answered madame de Salvé, "to drag a compliment from you, but I really am astonish'd, if you were ever so extremely dissipated as the world speaks you, what can have wrought so sudden and so wonderful a change." "It is to you, madam," replied I, "I owe it,

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it is you who have charmed me from that course of vain and idle pleasures I had sunk into, and made me in exchange experience pleasures the most pure, yet the most lively; my soul is capable of tasting; too blessed, if you will one day deign to partake of them with me." Here madame de Salvé would have interrupted me, but I allowed her not time. I had hitherto maintained one continued silence; I had no sooner broke it, than I felt myself delivered from the most weighty burden, and continuing the conversation with some vivacity; "Yes, madame," said I, "I feel my attachment for you can end but with my life; that the whole universe would to me be a barren waste, insupportable without you; you occupy the place of *all* in my heart. I have until now been lost to myself, to every rational sentiment, plunged in the low abyss of sensual pleasures, a stranger to the delights of love; love has enlightened me, and

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you alone, madame, could inspire me with it." I shall not enter here into a farther detail of our conversation, or its consequences, suffice it to say, that upon the whole, it amounted to assurances of love the most violent, and vows of constancy that no time, no temptation could shake. No sooner had I ended my confession, than I trembled, and dreaded the answer of madame de Salvé, who seemed neither pleased nor angry, but replied with great coolness: "The habit you have acquired, of delivering yourself up to every transitory liking you feel for every woman you see, makes you believe yourself in love; or perhaps you hold this jargon adapted to the taste of women in general, and the only one in which a man of the world should address them. Be that as it may, without wishing to suspect your sincerity, if you feel any degree of liking for me, I advise you not to encourage it; you will not be happy in loving alone, and I will

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not risque rendering myself unhappy, by answering your passion." "Ah! madame," said I, "what mighty misfortunes can you dread, in partaking the sentiments of an honest man, a man of honour, who loves you, and you only?" "The greatest," added she, "that can befall a reasonable woman; this man of honour you talk of, and as the world understands it, is still very far from a complete, a perfect lover; even the man of the most allowed probity is perhaps never without reproach, without spot, in the eyes of (I will not say a bright, but) a sensible woman; she is frequently reduced to lament her lot in secret, while her lover lives irreprehensible in the world, nay carested by it, which renders her still more wretched." Madame de Salvé perceiving I was about to interrupt her, to remove, if possible, these prejudices, added, "It is useless to enter into any farther discussion on this subject, or to attempt to destroy my ideas of dangers

gers to which I am resolved never to expose myself; not even if I had my heart to combat with, which happily is by no means the case at present; nevertheless, since I have no cause of complaint against you, and that your character appears to me estimable, I will readily grant you my friendship; and, I assure you, I shall be infinitely more flattered by having inspired you with that sentiment, than with the blind passion of love." I was so struck with the strength, the delicacy of madame de Salvé's reasoning, that it still augmented my esteem for her, consequently my love. When this passion has once entered the heart, our soul receives no other sentiments but those which serve to satisfy it. I found great consolation in having declared myself, and was but too happy in obtaining the return madame de Salvé offered me; it was no more than friendship, but the friendship of a woman, amiable and young, inspires sentiments so tender, so delicious,

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delicious, that my acknowledgments were those of a lover. I did not dare oppose her opinion, perceiving she knew too well how to support it, and that contradiction might fix those sentiments more strongly; but I purposed laying hold on the first occasion that should offer to renew the conversation on this topic. A woman who often talks of the dangers of love, inures herself to the hardships she risks, and familiarizes herself to that passion, by bringing it often to her view, which, by the way, we seldom ever do with impunity. I omitted not one day going to madame de Salvé's; my visits could not grow more frequent, but they grew still longer than ordinary; I passed my life with her, without daring to ask a return; I talked to her of my passion, the confession I had already made authorised me; I said, that her refusing me the place I had asked in her heart, could not change mine, and though I could pretend to no more

more than her friendship, I conjured her to grant me the tenderest esteem. She assured me she would, and I then ventured to kiss her hand. The caresses of friendship are able to warm the heart, and give rise to love. Seduced under the colour of so pure an attachment, madame de Salvé resisted but feebly; I accustomed her insensibly to hear me talk of my passion, and waited with some degree of patience, till time and my constancy should raise those sentiments I wished, or rather until I obtained a confession of it; for I plainly perceived the progress I each day made in her heart: love no sooner ceases to offend, than it becomes catching. In this manner I passed three months with her, astonished at my constancy; no other woman had ever held me so long, neither by rendering me happy, or treating me with rigour; as it was the pleasures of sense only which had hitherto attached me to the women, success very soon cooled,

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and severity repulsed me; but, instead of that, love and esteem united to fix me to madame de Salvé for ever: I was wholly occupied by a desire to please her, and she shewed some degree of sensibility to those endeavours. I no longer neglected to obtain that confession which establishes more effectually the prerogative of a lover, than all other favours a lady can bestow. Madame de Salvé acknowledged that my character and turn of mind, which at first frightened her, were become perfectly agreeably to her; and that I was the only man for whom she could have had a partiality, had she not been on her guard against the power of love. I often renewed these conversations, and in talking of the count her husband, I endeavoured to make her feel the difference there was between giving one's self up to a tender, a passionate lover, and subjecting one's self to the whims of an odious husband. Madame de Salvé frankly confessed to me
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she had never loved her husband, the disparity of age, above all, his temper, would not permit her to love him; but hardly would she allow that she was not perfectly happy; and when I insisted on the torments she must have experienced hourly, from the jealousy of the count de Salvé, she answered simply, that a reasonable woman ought never to complain on that subject; it was her part to cure that jealousy by her conduct, and even to pardon it, considering it arose from a principle of love; in short, she never let fall a single syllable derogatory to the memory of her husband. All which, added to the respect I had for madame de Salvé, augmented likewise my passion for her. I was almost certain the friendship she professed for me, was no more than a pretext to cover the passion I had been happy enough to inspire her with; and I ventured in the end at endeavouring to gain a confession of it. One day, when by

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her discourse, and the confidence she placed in me, she gave me marks of the most tender friendship. "Pardon, madam," said I, "my temerity; I can no longer doubt that you have for me sentiments more lively, more tender than those of friendship; grant me an avowal of them, it will serve to render my attachment still more inviolable." She seemed thunder-struck, and sighed instead of answering me; I would not allow her time to recover herself, or let slip this blessed moment; I pressed her anew, threw myself at her feet, and made her the most sanguine protestations of love, &c. "I am much afraid," replied she, "my conduct towards you has already explained my sentiments more amply than the verbal confession you exact could do. I will no longer seek to hide my soul from you; it was tenderly interested in your behalf before that I *even* perceived it: I am no longer in a situation to combat a passion
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that drags me whither it pleases; nay, perhaps I have neither the strength nor the will to do it. You see what lengths my confidence in you carries me; will you, can you make me repent it?" I was so charmed to hear what I had so long and so ardently desired, that I expressed my acknowledgments in transports the most lively, removed her fears, and swore eternal constancy: I was at liberty to dispose of my hand, I offered it to her, as a security for my sincerity. "It is not," says she, "oaths or laws which can answer to me for your fidelity; my felicity depends not on being tied to you by that knot which necessity and constraint makes indissoluble; it is your heart only can satisfy me. Nevertheless, I will not refuse the offer you make me; in our situation it is requisite; besides, I would, were it possible, devise some new bond, to unite me still more closely to you. But although I am mistress of, and
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answerable for, my own conduct, I am not by my age at liberty to dispose of my hand; and they to whom the law still allows some authority over me in this respect, have more interested views for me; therefore we may probably meet with some opposition on their part. I can assure you, I shall render all their designs abortive, but we must defer our marriage yet a while; it would ill become either you or I to enter into such solemn engagements in the face of the world, until they were absolutely free from obstacles of every kind: I shall have leisure, in the mean time, to prove your heart, and our union will acquire still more charms from it."

I approved of madame de Salvé's proposal; I consented to all she desired; notwithstanding my impatience to possess such a treasure, I had no will but her's; I lived in hope, and though I wished for still more substantial bliss, my situation was infinitely happier than any thing I had before

before experienced in my whole life: I tasted with madame de Salvé all the charms of a pure, refined passion; the happiest state of lovers. This sort of life was quite new to me, I had been accustomed to less esteem and more liberty, and was sometimes tempted to try with madame de Salvé my former method with women; I told her, when we had once given our hearts, we ought not to refuse a lover favours of much less value, much less precious; I presented my reasons under every possible colour, and decorated my maxims with all that common-place stuff, I had at other times employed so successfully with many women: but these arguments were now of no use to me; because madame de Salvé conducted herself upon principles very different to those ladies I had before met with. She always answered me without emotion, sometimes pleasantly; that on the adhering to this custom (ridiculous as it appeared to me) depended

pended the honour, and even the happiness, of a woman; that her heart was favourable to me, but the prejudices of the world was against me, and though the men seem to approve of it, we never see that they preserve their attachment for a woman who has sacrificed to them these prejudices. I felt the force of, and could not but approve, these reasons, which displeased me infinitely: in short, I was obliged to submit to the ideas of madame de Salvé, since I could not make her adopt mine, which, without doubt, were not the most just. Lovers would be too happy if their passion could be kept up by continual obstacles: it is no less essential towards happiness to preserve desire, than to satisfy it. We lived in a commerce the most delightful, when the rumour of a war broke out, and obliged me to think of joining my regiment; I felt all that I was capable of feeling, on the thoughts of being separated from madame de Salvé;

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but nothing could equal the pain this news caused her: in preparing for my departure, I did not dare name it to her, for fear of afflicting her a-new; but I could not help appearing sensibly touched at it, which she, remarking, said to me, "Your situation is very different to mine; you have only those inquietudes absence must naturally cause; but I am going, with that, to experience the most cruel of all destinies, a life of eternal alarm, at best *suspence*, of the welfare of all I hold dear on earth." She said no more, but her tears, more eloquent than all she could say, painted a sorrow more lively than I had ever seen, it penetrated the inmost recesses of my soul; and after making many unsuccessful efforts to console her, I retired, to give a loose to my griefs. I reflected on that chimaera, honour, to which I sacrificed the happiness of my life; agitated a long time by these ideas, I was often tempted to abandon all, and trouble myself but
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little about what the world would say, provided I was happy; but I very soon blushed at, and loathed sentiments so little worthy my birth and my profession. I passed the whole night in this anxiety of mind, and went as usual in the morning to madame de Salvé's house: I found her as much afflicted, and more dejected, than the day before; I could have triumphed over my own sorrow, but I could not support her's; I forgot all the fine sentiments of honour that I had till then sustained, it appeared to me a barbarity, and I resolved to sacrifice it to the tranquillity of madame de Salvé. I threw myself at her feet, told her I was unable to resist her tears, and to dry them up, I would go instantly and quit the service; that I should be but too blessed to live with her. This, I doubted not, would re-establish the calm in her soul. She looked at me some time without saying a word; and embracing me on a sudden with a transport which she had never before done, "I feel," says she, "how

dear it would cost you to make that sacrifice you offer me, but I should be unworthy of it, was I capable of accepting it; I am too content, too well pleased with the power love gives me over you, to wish to exert it; I surrender you to your own heart, I surrender you to your duty, and that is restoring you to yourself." I was so transported with admiration, that I ought to have made her that sacrifice from gratitude, which I had before offered from compassion, for the misery I saw her suffer. I said every thing that love and respect could inspire me with; I assured her she was absolute mistress of my destiny and my conduct; that I could not have a better guide, than a person whose judgment was strong, clear, and impartial, and whose character was so respectable. From this moment madame de Salvé appeared much more tranquil; or perhaps I did not perceive that she concealed *her* sensibility, for fear of

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exciting mine. She told me, a man of my birth had no other part to take, or to follow, but that of arms; the only profession of the French *noblesse*, as it was their origin; and that a woman who would dare to inspire her lover with other sentiments, was worthy to serve his pleasures only, not to fill his heart: in short, so soon as my duty came in question, the tender madame de Salvé disappeared, and I found in her the most true, the most firm friend. How cruel soever absence was to our love, I was charmed to meet with sentiments so generous; and my passion became a thousand times more violent. Madame de Salvé, as I have already said, embraced me in the first transport of her griefs; that favour emboldened me to ask others, and though it was to a species of importunity I owed her suffering my caresses, I thought I saw her opposition arose more from modesty, than from any other motive: I pressed her to

complete my happiness; she conjured me to exact nothing from her that was contrary to her duty, and told me, that her heart, of which I was too sure, ought to satisfy me; and that I was too dear to her, for her to risque losing me. I saw that my importunities afflicted her, and insisted no more; and left her, after I had received all imaginable assurances of a love the most inviolable and tender. The time that remained between that and my departure was too precious not to be dedicated entirely to madame de Salvé; I passed the whole day with her; our conversation turned on nothing but our passion, the rigour of our duty, and the necessity of fulfilling it. I always found in madame de Salvé the same tenderness and the same charms: very far from being able to remain in that state of reserve she exacted, I felt my pain increase more and more, and begun again to press her; I swore my heart was inviolably attached to her;

her; that she was become too necessary to the happiness of my life, nay to my very existence, for her to fear my inconstancy. She would have called me back to that respect I had for her, but my love grew too violent to be restrained; I intreated, I pressed, and to the vivacity of my solicitations and oaths I joined enterprize; she was moved, she sighed, resisted but feebly, and I became the happiest of mankind. It is love only that gives the zest, and sets a value on pleasure; attached by love, fixed by indulgence, I found madame de Salvé but still more beautiful; but, alas! one moment's reflection plunged her into the deepest sorrow and remorse, she did not dare to look at me, she even shed tears, her grief pierced my very soul; formed to have every delicate, every tender sentiment, I regarded myself as criminal, I feared I was become odious to her, and conjured her not to hate me. "Alas!" replied she, "will it be in my power to hate you? for

I feel I shall lose you; oh! can I ever forgive myself! I forgot nothing that could be said to dissipate her fears, which I thought injurious to me; I assured her of a constancy inviolable, and swore to her, that as soon as she would give me her hand, we would fasten with the seal of the law, and the testimony of the public, that knot which love had formed. The vivacity of my caresses gave weight to my oaths; madame de Salvé composed herself, and told me, (in the tenderest tone of voice) she should never reproach herself for having sacrificed every thing to my wish, while she could be sure of my heart, the fidelity or inconstancy of which must render her the most happy, or the most wretched of women. My oaths, my transports, and love dissipated all her fears, and I obtained my pardon. I passed but a few more of these whole days with this heavenly woman, before I was ordered to my regiment. Our sepa-

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ration was cruel, in proportion to our happiness, which, to judge of, you must feel. The noise of the war, which was spread over the whole world, served but to render the peace more secure, and the campaign was finished in a peaceable camp. I returned to Paris more in love than I was when I left it, and firmly resolved to press my marriage with madame de Salvé: attached by love, pleasure, and gratitude, should I have thought of any other tie to unite me more strongly with her? We met each other with transports which can be comprehended only by those who have experienced them. I passed a whole year in this excess of pleasure; love was its source, and pleasure added new charms to love; I saw no body but madame de Salvé; I was entirely her's, and without her all was strange, foreign, and impertinent to me. Why, and how happens it, that a situation so delicious must have an end? It was not unalter-

able youth I desired, youth is itself often the occasion of inconstancy; I aspired not at changing the condition of humanity; but our hearts ought to be more perfect; the enjoyments of the mind should be eternal.

The principle of my happiness was always the same, notwithstanding it abated in proportion as I began to taste it less. Those pleasures which had heretofore dragged me along with such violence, were become odious to me, when they would force me from madame de Salvé; I grew, however, insensibly to regard them with less and less disgust, till at length they appeared to me absolutely necessary, to keep out that languor which naturally glides into the commerce of two lovers. Our constancy (however boasted) is not far from its period, when we would reduce it into a principle. If I sought not after the former companions of my pleasures, who were dispersed over the face of the whole earth, I made account to try the sweets of society, once more at least, with

with which Paris swarms; you are not obliged to seek them, not to fly them is sufficient. I was less assiduous in my visits to madame de Salvé; that is to say, I did not go there every day, and my visits were rather shorter, taking it for granted it was as it appeared to me at first, no more than a renewal of that taste I had for public places, which madame de Salvé had suspended, because she seldom went to any; and I could live only in the place where she was. I returned to them; I generally met with some one of my friends, who carried me to sup along with them. The first time that I neglected to return to madame de Salvé's house, where I always supped, she was extremely uneasy, feared some accident had befallen me, and sent early in the morning to enquire after me; I went immediately to see her; she made me some tender reproaches; I did not think I merited them; nevertheless, I was embarrassed, and coloured. It

must be that we have within ourselves a sentiment more penetrating than reason, nay than even wisdom herself, which absolves or condemns us, with an equity the most enlightened; there is, in short, if I dared say it, a sagacity of heart, which is the measure of our sensibility. A few days after, I was again engaged to a supper; the first reproaches madame de Salvé made me, disquieted me at the time; I feared fresh reproaches, and found infinite consolation in meeting with none, notwithstanding that my absence became more frequent; but I never neglected going to sup with her that I did not feel some remorse, a sensation we never experience without meriting it; and when we examine scrupulously, we may find out the motives. Madame de Salvé was almost always alone; as I had signified to her, I thought nothing so odious as those visits which constrained the hearts of lovers, she had insensibly left off the few people she saw before

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before she became acquainted with me; therefore I ought in honour and conscience to have shared that solitude to which she was reduced merely to please me. She never made me the smallest reproach, after that I have already mentioned, which hardly deserved the name, from the gentleness, nay sweetness in her manner of offering it; but I could not help seeing that her mind was less at ease, and that an unusual melancholy hung over her. I sometimes asked her the cause of it, she always said she had not any; and when I begged and insisted on her telling me if she had any reason to lament on my score, she assured me she was perfectly satisfied and content, and shewed me every kindness, every tenderness that could possibly remove my doubts. Satisfying (or rather abasing) myself on my innocence, I launched out more and more into dissipation; nevertheless, I was uneasy on seeing madame de Salvé more serious (but not less tender) towards

towards me. I reproached myself, that afflicted me, and although it constrained me in nothing, I felt the cruel torture of remorse; but, alas! the habitude of meriting it, made me very soon lose all sense of it. The facility, or rather the great goodness of madame de Salvé contributed towards it. When I had been some days without seeing her, I would have alledged something in excuse, but she spared me the pain, by giving me to understand she was charmed I could amuse myself; that a man could not remain in continual solitude, that was more adapted and becoming to the situation of a woman: and what desire soever she might have to be always with me, my pleasure consoled her for every thing. These sentiments were so much the more agreeable, as they set my mind at ease. Madame de Salvé became more dear to me, though not more necessary; we cherish mechanically those who save us from blame,

blame, still more they who excuse our faults: whatever complaisance she had for my taste, I could not be deceived in the pleasure my presence caused her, and formed a design of passing some time with her, and to behave from gratitude, as I had heretofore done from passion, and as it had been impossible for me not to do. The time we dedicate to propriety only, always appears very long; an involuntary restlessness got the better of me, and it seemed as if poor madame de Salvé perceived it before I did, for she was the first to engage me to quit her, and seek more lively amusements; she did not directly tell me so, but she furnished me with a pretext that I should perhaps never have thought of, though I desired it. I wondered how she could be so blind to my faults, with so much penetration to prevent even my wishes. I loved her only, she had no rival in my heart; and since nothing was wanting there, I imagined our

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commerce

commerce would grow as lively as ever; if she would enter into society; I proposed it, she consented; for she never had any will but mine. We passed some time together in this strain, and I found it much more agreeable. Lovers who have spent the first fire of their passion, are charmed with every thing that shortens the length of a tête à tête. If my pleasures were not altogether so sanguine as they had been, at least I desired no other. This tranquillity was but of short duration, I had hitherto been only inconstant, I soon became unfaithful. There are women who make advances, without having any other point in view than gaining admirers, or sometimes from a simple habit of coquetry; and there are others, who would be totally insensible to a man's attachment for them, if they did not tear him from another mistress. I met with one of this character, and unluckily she pleased me; my intimacy with madame de

de Salvé was known; our commerce perhaps rather a secret, but there were those who were not ignorant of it. Madame Dorigny resolved to become her rival, and succeeded but too well: this was a little figure of fancy, lively, giddy-brained, always talked before she thought, and never reflected; her youth, joined to a habitude of pleasure and coquetry, served her instead of wit, and often supplies its place to advantage in the world. I gave her not (most assuredly) the least preference over Madame de Salvé, to whom she was inferior in every single point; there was nothing for her but novelty; my heart was always madame de Salvé's, yet I determined to amuse myself with Dorigny, she merited nothing more, and did not indeed appear to exact more. She had for a husband a rich man, who kept a very good house, and troubled himself very little about the conduct of his wife, provided he drew company to his house, which

which (good or bad) this house never wanted. I was introduced there by a friend of mine, who had no other right in the world to present me, but that of having been introduced there himself about eight days before. I supped there frequently, the vivacity of madame Dorigny amused me, and she appeared to me a proper object to relax my mind from the serious turn it had acquired by living with madame de Salvé, whose character was perfectly adapted for a real passion and permanent happiness ; but a simple commerce of gallantry would afford me more enjoyment. The little Dorigny, who had heard of my attachment to madame de Salvé, spoke of her as all women do of one another ; that is to say, she lavished praises on her figure and her wit, with all the *ifs* and *ands* customary on such occasions, to which I answered as I ought ; I rendered justice to madame de Salvé, by assuring her there never had been any other con-

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nexion between us, than that of sincere friendship; that was enough to tell her I might have another. This conversation served me for a declaration; without love I offered my heart to Dorigny, and she received it in the same manner. She believed she had razed from my soul all traces of madame de Salvé; for my part, I well knew I had done no more than replaced one whose reign was finished. I was very soon known in the society for her titular lover; that is to say, for the *maitre de la maison*: I enjoyed all the prerogatives of my new dignity, of which importunities, &c. made a part. I might, it is true, introduce whom I pleased to Dorigny's house; but it was necessary also I should preside at the head of all the parties, which were not always so amusing as they were noisy. It was not possible I should suffer myself to be carried away by this torrent, and preserve at the same time a decent assiduity towards madame de
Salvé,

Salvé, and this afflicted me; that I loved her not with the vivacity I had done was certain, but, in short, I loved only her, she was still more necessary to my heart than Dorsigny was to my dissipation. The most cruel of all situations to a man of honour, is that of not being able to reconcile his heart and reason to his conduct. My pain greatly increased whenever I was with madame de Salvé; I sometimes found her in a state of dejection, which penetrated my very soul; she received my caresses, but gave me no more; I could not perceive that her heart was cooled towards me, she only seemed to fear being troublesome and impertinent to me; when I had quitted her, her image still followed me, and poisoned all my pleasures; I was an hundred times on the brink of returning to her for ever; my situation might want that enlivening variety brings, but it would at least be free from the bitter pangs of remorse; but what completed my

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my disquiet, was the fear that madame de Salvé should ever find out my intrigue with Dorigny, whom Leven fancied I loved, for pleasure does bear a faint resemblance to love: not but that I rendered the most exact justice to both the one and the other; my reason was more equitable than my heart: I amused myself with madame Dorigny, but I had not the least confidence in her; whereas nothing befel either me or my fortune, that I did not instantly fly to give madame de Salvé an account of it, and ask her advice; I found her always the same tender, wise, enlightened friend, with a judgment clear and unwarped by prejudice. I was not *worthy* of her, yet on these occasions my love returned with all its force; but, alas! it very soon sunk into its former state of languor; the flame of love once extinguished, will no more produce a conflagration; to enjoy self-tranquillity I found I must render my visits more rare at madame de Salvé's house,

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and become more criminal, to lose my remorse; *they were indeed* less frequent, and soon became nothing more than a duty I fulfilled with constraint and reluctance. Notwithstanding that madame de Salvé was in a situation to accept of my hand, I felt no longer that haste to offer it; I doubted not but she would remind me of a promise on which her honour depended, and I dreaded it every moment, but not a word escaped her; waiting, without doubt, that the proposal might come from me; but to my shame I confess, I turned her delicacy (not having a grain of my own) to the best use for my present purposes, and waved every conversation that could tend towards awakening her ideas to the solemn vows I had made; a performance of which she had every reason in the world to expect, as well as to wish. Poor madame de Salvé never made me the smallest reproach on my absence and unpardonable neglect of her. On the other hand,

hand, madame Dorigny, more vain than jealous, (for there was not a spark of real love kindled in either of our breasts) pretended that the connexion between madame de Salvé and me appeared very suspicious, and forbid me seeing her; and I had the rashness to promise her I would not go there any more. I was reduced to the most cruel of all situations. The happiness or miseries of our lives depend infinitely more upon these trifles, so frivolous in appearance, than on the most important affairs; more sincerity or equity would have spared me much pain. I was in this wretched situation, when a relation of mine, who commonly resided at his estate in the country, within a little distance of Paris, came to solicit the court about an affair which had been long depending: I interested myself warmly, and was successful enough to get it terminated to his satisfaction. Before he returned into the country, he insisted upon giving
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me a supper; I went to it; on my entering the room, he told me (with an air of satisfaction) he had taken care to collect company that would be agreeable to me; that his great and first attention was always to affort his company properly, such as were suitable and agreeable to each other; and poured forth on this subject many maxims of the *sçavoir vivre*s, and was haranguing much in his own praise, when I beheld madame Dorigny enter. I was charmed, and found out that my relation had (for a man who lived so much in the country) very pleasing and delicate attentions; but this pleasure was of no long duration, for the instant after, they announced madame de Salvé; my unfortunate countryman being informed who were the people I generally lived with, failed not to invite them; and as all those who live in the world are enough known at Paris to each other, both to give and accept a supper, he had assembled

assembled eight or ten persons. I never in my life felt myself in so awkward a situation; I was absolutely obliged to entertain madame de Salvé and madame Dorigny in a manner suitable to the conduct I held in particular both with the one and the other. The superiority of rank madame de Salvé held over her rival, authorised me to pay her all the first honours and preference; but independent of the regards due to rank, they who share our hearts have a claim to every distinction; but both these ladies had a right to pretend to mine. Besides, little madame Dorigny not only held, that love levelled all ranks, but that it should carry me above all common customs, and permit her to triumph over her rival. In vain did I flatter myself the weakness of her head would admit the excuses I offered, in defence of the preference and attention madame de Salvé's birth and friendship exacted from me. I was horribly deceived; all women have

sense enough on these occasions, and in these matters; vanity enlightens them, and, what is worse, renders them unjust. My greatest difficulty was to hide from madame de Salvé my intrigue with madame Dorigny. I ought not naturally to have had so much familiarity with a woman I had never owned I was acquainted with. It must be allowed this was an embarrassing situation, and that a man of sense must feel it more strongly than a simpleton. At table I was placed between these two rivals; there was no advances madame Dorigny did not make me, she went beyond all those liberties which custom had tolerated, and which reasonable women are shocked at. Madame de Salvé was the only person who seemed not to perceive it: this charmed me; I piqued the little Dorigny to a degree that rendered her ten times more ridiculous and absurd than ever. I was in pain, when, to fill up the measure of my misery,

fery, the master of the house reminded me of a slight promise I had made him, to visit at his country-house; at the same time asking all at the table to be of the party. "I shall be infinitely happy," says he, "to reunite at my house this good and agreeable company. He addressed himself first to madame de Salvé, who did not absolutely refuse, waiting for my answer; madame Dorigny made it for me, and approved mightily of the proposal: the journey was fixed for the day after the morrow. The next morning I went to madame de Salvé's with a countenance full of embarrassment and guilt. Her blindness was inconceivable; it was too great for me not to suspect its reality; I regarded it as the effect of prudence, and doubted not she had an explication in reserve for me, however well she dissembled her rage in public; but I found not the least change in the reception she gave me; and I really believed she was

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deceived,

deceived, and had no sort of suspicion of Dorigny and me. I had dreaded the party into the country, but this cheered up my spirits; I imagined, that after having carried on my deception so successfully at supper, I should find no great difficulty in doing it in the country, and pressed her much to go. She raised difficulties that astonished me, but at length consented, and we went the next day. I determined, on my part, to avoid being alone with either the one or the other of these rivals, and things went on in the country as smoothly, as they had done at the supper. I at first suffered some constraint; madame de Salvé was very grave, and madame Dorigny a mere giddy-brain. The tranquillity of the countess soon removed all my apprehensions, and I believed her so blind as to render all measures on my part unnecessary: love of pleasure triumphed over esteem, I gave myself up to all the whims of ma-

dame

dame Dorigny; and she seemed to have no further jealousies of madame de Salvé. On a recollection of my past conduct, I have often felt of what importance it is to a man of honour, to be attentive to the principles and character of the object he attaches himself to; our virtues or our vices depend on it, with this difference only, that we sometimes content ourselves with esteeming virtue, whereas we never fail partaking of vice and folly. I neglected madame de Salvé excessively, who, on the other hand, was the object of the regard and attention of all the rest of the company. But Dorigny and I had so little regard to appearances, that the least clear-sighted must have penetrated the secret of our commerce; and in the end it blazed out in the eyes of the persons from whom it behoved me most to keep it a secret. Madame Dorigny and I had retired to a part of a wood very little frequented, where we toyed with a freedom

that needed no witnesses; the place, the occasion, and love of pleasure seduced us, and was carried to the greatest length, when chance brought madame de Salvé (who sought solitude) to the very spot where we were. She found us in a situation by no means equivocal. No sooner did she see us, than she retired with the utmost precipitation; but not without convincing us nothing had escaped her. No words can paint the astonishment and trouble we sustained; we remained for some time motionless, and without uttering a syllable; I was in absolute despair, at having for the witness of my infidelity, the person in the world I injured by it, and who merited it so little, and who I flattered myself I had deceived with impunity until that instant. Madame Dorsigny knew little of my heart, and imagined that a man (as the generality of us are guided only by pleasure and vanity) could, on such an occasion, have nothing

to regard on his own account, and believed all the public censure must fall upon her: besides, to be surprised by a woman whom she looked upon as an incensed rival; added to this, she knew her sex, and judging by herself, thought a woman needed not the addition of jealousy to induce her to enjoy such a discovery; she cried, she was ruined, for ever ruined, and that she would set out that very instant for Paris, not daring to return to the castle. I employed every argument my reason could suggest to calm her, although I had myself need of the same succours: I satisfied her at length of the probity of the amiable countess, whose resentment against me I feared, though I was sure of her prudence, humanity, and discretion. I at last made madame Dorigny sensible, that our departure would naturally cause more scandal than all madame de Salvé could say. We returned to the castle with the fear and dejection of criminals; be-

fore my heart had been new formed by the countess, I should perhaps have returned with an air of triumph. It was already late, the company assembled, and very near sitting down to supper. Madame Dorigny said, she found herself much indisposed, and had need of rest. The master of the house deemed it the height of politeness to press her to sit down to table; and notwithstanding she wished, and would have given the universe to be alone, she did not dare refuse him. Madame de Salvé (who knew the cause of her indisposition) spared no pains to remove her fears, nay even to prevent them; nor was there any one attention she did not shew her: nothing but the excess of her goodness, that is to say, her generous compassion, could (after detecting her rival) give her such feeling for her; but it was thrown away on madame Dorigny; she had neither a heart delicate enough, nor sense and penetration sufficient to unravel the

principle of behaviour so uncommon, and contented herself with believing her rival had not discovered any thing; for she could not imagine that a woman with so many advantages would not make an ill use of them. Her gaiety returned with her health, and before supper was finished she was as noisy and absurd as ever. Madame de Salvé was charmed at this change in her; I had judged differently, but all that deserves the name of virtue I met with in the countess; she was more sensibly pleased in having satisfied Dorigny, than she would have been with her acknowledgments; for those she must have received at the expence of her happiness. I durst not look at madame de Salvé, and feared still more, meeting her alone. I would not draw Dorigny out of the error she was in; but I burned with impatience to be at Paris, where we arrived the next day. Madame de Salvé's conduct upon this occasion at last

opened my eyes: if she had not until now had those proofs of my infidelity I apprehended, she had shrewdly suspected it, and I clearly saw the cause of her chagrin and reserve towards me, but I could not conceive what it was that hindered her breaking with me; I could not doubt her having had conviction, and concluded she would only see me to give me my dismissal. I was in absolute despair; I had in reality no longer that violent, that outrageous passion for madame de Salvé, which rendered all other objects tiresome to me, but I did not love her less; my passion became more tranquil, it was united with a friendship the most tender; the inconstancy which reigned in my mind, more than in my heart, the life of intrigue I had led, made me always search out some free, unrestrained commerce, but I loved the countess only; I found her absolutely necessary to the happiness of my life; and I could not think without horror that she

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was going to forbid me ever seeing her : I was ready to sacrifice madame Dorigny, and all the women in the world, to obtain a pardon, and resolved to go to madame de Salvé, to avow my faults, express my remorse, and endeavour to blot them from her memory, by a conduct more worthy her admirer, and a man of honour ; too happy in accepting any conditions she should impose on me. I went with all those fears that weigh down the guilty ; I accosted her trembling, she received me with a serious air, which, however, bore no marks of indignation. Notwithstanding, I durst not open my lips : at last, after experiencing a thousand inward conflicts, I told her, I came to throw myself at her feet, as a criminal, soliciting that grace I felt I was not worthy of. This amiable woman had compassion on my miseries, and would not suffer me to continue a conversation which she judged must cost me so dear. “ I see,” says she, “ you begin to
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know your faults; but perhaps you reproach not yourself with those I most sensibly feel; you know I have sacrificed all to you: believe not I was seduced by the pleasures of sense; not but that I partook of your pleasures, yet it was love alone determined me; I never had a wish but that of making you happy; it was not to your oaths, your vows, I yielded, they answered for your honesty, but they are not the bond that unites hearts, and I have consulted but my own. You are however, no less obliged to fulfil your engagements, though I have seen how much you feared I should remind you of them; I should perhaps have exposed you to proceedings full as bad, had I refused you my hand; or if I had done you the honour to accept it, I should have been much more unhappy; your engagements would have augmented your guilt, and rendered me still more odious to you." At these words I interrupted her, and throwing myself

myself at her feet, gave her the most lively marks of a sincere repentance, pressed her to accept of my hand, and swore to preserve a fidelity eternal. "It is not now the time," says she; "I believe your offers and your protestations sincere at this moment, but you promise more than you can perform; you have been unfaithful to me, you will be so again; it is possible never to have been false, but to have been so but once is without example: there has been a time I could flatter myself with your constancy; you had given yourself up to gallantry and intrigue, without ever having been really in love; love might perhaps fix you; I even dared to hope it: since he could not, nothing can; you would be able to observe decencies, to save appearances; but appearances ill supply the place of love. I saw not your coolness for me without the bitterest sorrow: I felt, before you even felt it, the first instant of your inconstancy; a mistress

is very clear-sighted. I hid (as much as possible from you) my pain, I dissembled my vexations; complaints and reproaches never reclaim any body; I should have afflicted you unprofitably, to no manner of purpose. Hitherto you had only been upon the reserve with me; had I appeared to you more penetrating, I should have obliged you perhaps to have had recourse to falsehoods, to deceive me. I see that to be constant is not in the power of the men, and that their education renders infidelity familiar to them; their attachments entirely depend on the vivacity of their inclinations; when the possession, when the confidence of a woman (who is credulous only because she loves) has once extinguished those inclinations, it is not esteem, nor even love, which can recall them; it is novelty alone can have that effect. Besides, that the prejudices of the world encourage men to infidelities; their honour suffers not, their vanity is flattered,

and custom) authorises it. If any thing can console me, it is seeing that I have still preserved your esteem, and, if I dared say it, your love; at least, all the tenderness your heart is now capable of. You have not been altogether so unfaithful to me as you could perhaps have wished to be; for, in short, it is grievous to have one's own heart always to combat with; you have experienced that remorse, which you would have been entirely freed from, had you ceased to love. I alone possess your heart; I never did any thing to lose it, and those whom you preferred to me in your pleasures, were not perhaps worthy of it; at least, it depended not on you to love them. Judge if at present it becomes me to accept your hand; *me*, who cannot be happy, if I find not at the same time in my husband the lover and the friend: the last of these titles is to me by far the most flattering; I would not, I ought not, I cannot pretend to any other;

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I have had interest enough in you to study you, and time to know you: your heart is good and faithful, but your mind fickle and uncertain, and dissipation the main of your character: follow your taste, have mistresses, I shall be too much flattered in remaining your friend; it is so sure that friendship follows or succeeds to love; though another partakes of your inclinations, I enjoy your whole confidence; I shall have no rival in my sentiments, and I have too much delicacy, and too much pride, to let me deign to share you with her, be she whom she will. The more I hoped to reclaim you, the more blind I seemed to your foibles; and the being persuaded, as you were, that you appeared really innocent in my eyes, left you at liberty to cease being culpable: a similar conduct on my part will no longer impose upon you, and serve only to render me contemptible." I was so struck with the sense, justness, and elegance of madame

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Madame de Salvé's discourse, that all my passion for her rekindled, and I had no other intention but that of sacrificing madame Dorigny as a condition of our reconciliation; and in this moment I would have sacrificed the universe to her. I conjured her to cherish once more her former sentiments towards me, and to accept of my hand as a security for mine. All my protestations were of no avail; I found this amiable woman equally tender in her friendship and firm in her resolutions; all the rights of a lover were interdicted me; I spent, notwithstanding, two months with her, without quitting her a single moment, without seeing any other woman, and without gaining any thing by my perseverance. Despairing at length to soften her, and not daring to condemn her, I feared to press her; I submitted myself to her disposition, and returned to my former habits. Madame de Salvé remarked it, and was the first to talk to me of it. I assured her, that

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As soon as she would, I was ready to sacrifice all, for the honour and happiness of returning to her. I was as assiduous in my visits as ever, because her presence no longer embarrassed me, and I was no more occupied in hiding from her my intrigues or my remorse: she talked to me of my mistresses, she drew their pictures in lively (but just) colours, and gave me lessons for my conduct. I always admired the justness of her sentiments, and committed no one infidelity towards her, if I may be allowed the use of the expression, in the singular situation I lived in with madame de Salvé, which served to make me discover new qualities in her soul, and new charms in her understanding, and to attach me still more and more to her. The commerce which subsisted between the countess and me was certainly of a species entirely new; I sometimes feared it would extinguish those sentiments she had vowed to preserve for me. That *would* indeed have plunged

plunged me into the utmost despair; her heart was still more precious to me than all my pleasures. "The indulgence," said I to her, "you have had for all my intrigues, could proceed but from your indifference; that it is I who should become jealous, is undoubtedly ridiculous and whimsical enough; but, in short, I cannot defend myself from the force of jealousy, when I see you so little touched with it: if you judge *me* innocent, you would not believe yourself very criminal, in giving ear to another lover. Madame de Salvé could not forbear laughing at my jealousy. "It would not be your conduct," replied she, "which ought to give me scruples, had I the least complaisance for any other than you; but you may rest satisfied on that score; nothing ever equalled my happiness, while I believed myself the only object of your regards, and I am better pleased still to preserve your heart by my indulgence, than to drive you from
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me by a severity which would in the end
 forely retort on myself. Though was I
 to follow your example, could you rea-
 sonably blame me? Nature has given
 but one and the same law to men and
 women. Nevertheless, you would have
 the double injustice to condemn that in
 me, you not only pardon, but think praise-
 worthy in yourself. But that which ought
 principally to render you easy in regard
 to this, is, that women, with infinitely more
 tenderness of heart than men, have much
 less vicious inclinations. The injurious
 reproaches thrown out against them, un-
 just in themselves, owe perhaps their ori-
 gin to those men who, void of all probity,
 ill-treat their wives for having a favourite
 lover, who probably never existed but in
 their idle brains. As for myself, I aver to
 you, I am very little sensible to the plea-
 sure of sense without love; I should ne-
 ver have known them; therefore be as-
 sured of my fidelity, although you have

no right to exact it from me; you are far less happy than I am; I have more pleasure in loving you, than you can possibly meet with in your inconstancy." My respect and my admiration augmented each day for madame de Salvé; her sentiments made me blush at my own, but did not make me correct them. It was not reason that could draw me out of my error; it was reserved for me to be disgusted with these creatures by the very women themselves, and I very soon begun to find nothing desirable in their commerce; their figure, their grace, their turn of mind, even their follies, had nothing in them new to me. I could not gain a mistress which did not resemble those I had already possessed; the whole sex were no more to me than one woman who was grown insipid to me: but what was remarkably singular, madame de Salvé acquired new charms in my eyes; her figure effaced all I had ever beheld,

beheld, and I could not conceive how it
 had been possible for me to prefer any
 person upon earth to her. Habitude,
 which diminishes the price of beauty, adds
 to character, dignity, &c. and serves but
 to attach us more strongly. Besides, my
 inconstancy towards the lovely countess,
 gave her occasion to shew me virtues I
 thought above humanity, and which my
 injustice made shine forth in their full
 lustre. She regained all her rights over
 my heart, or rather it was no more the
 violent, tumultuous emotion which at first
 drew me after her, and which became in
 the end the source of my errors; it was
 no more the impetuous intoxication of the
 senses; a sentiment a thousand times more
 tender, more tranquil, and more delightful
 filled my soul, and caused a calm to reign
 in it, which still added to my happiness,
 in leaving it at liberty to feel it. I saw
 madame de Salvé incessantly; my visits,
 which

which were suspended for some time, when I wished to hide from her the knowledge of my infidelities, now became more frequent than ever, so soon as they were unrestrained; and in a very little time I found neither pleasure nor comfort out of her house. Insensibly, and without my perceiving it distinctly, disgust detached me from that world, which dissipation had caused me to seek. It was madame de Salvê that first remarked it to me; I agreed with her, and seized this opportunity to press her anew to accept of my hand. "I now consent," replied she, "I cannot in conscience refuse it; I no longer fear losing you; but you will own to me it is very singular, that to take a husband, I have been obliged to wait till his passion for me was extinguished; nevertheless, it is this which renders me secure of your heart; it is not my lover that I espouse, it is a friend with whom I unite myself, whose

whose tenderness and esteem is to me a thousand times more precious than all the idle transports of a blind passion."

As our marriage needed no other preparations than our mutual consent, it was very soon concluded. It is no more the vague pleasures of love we cherish; a sentiment infinitely more noble, more tender, reigns in my heart. How was I charmed, on reflecting I might assure myself of possessing for ever all that was dear to me on earth! and of passing my life with this excellent woman, in whom I met the same inclinations! The world, far from being necessary to our happiness, could only tease us; therefore I made a proposal to madame de Salvé of going to pass some time at my estate in the country, which she accepted with rapture. She said, she desired nothing but me, and the place where she could enjoy my company with the most uninterrupted tranquillity, she should

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should always prefer to any other. It is now a year since we left Paris, and we have never had a single wish to return : for what have we to do with a world useless towards our happiness, and to which we should appear ridiculous? We are more and more charmed with our solitude; I find the whole universe in my wife, who is my soul; she is all my heart can wish for, and desires no other bliss on earth but to pass her life with me : we live, we feel, we think together; we enjoy that union of hearts which is the fruit and the principle of virtue. What attaches me still more to my wife is, that to her I owe this inestimable jewel, this precious virtue; and she, without doubt, cherishes me as the work of her own hands. I live content, and am thoroughly persuaded the situation I enjoy is the happiest an honest man and a man of honour can aspire to. It was madame de Salvé

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that made me know the high price, the real value of a reasonable woman: until now I knew not the sex, but judged of them by those who partook of my errors; and I judged unfairly even with respect to them. With what justice dare we reproach *them* with faults of which we are both the authors and the accomplices? The greatest part of them had never fallen into irregularities and debaucheries, but from placing in men a confidence they were not worthy of. Numbers would never have had weaknesses, had they not had tenderness of soul; a quality which enhances even the price of virtue. Both sexes have in common vices and virtues; virtue has something that appears still more amiable in women, and their faults deserve our pity. From the wretchedness of the education they receive in their infancy, they are told of their duty, without being made to know the true principles of it.

Their

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Their lovers soon after entertain them with a language diametrically opposite. How then can they defend themselves from seduction? The method of education *in general* is still very imperfect, not to say barbarous; but that of women is the most neglected: there is, nevertheless, but one rule of morality for both the sexes.

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